

THE MISFIT

The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking.
Albert Einstein

As long as there are sovereign nations possessing great power, war is inevitable.
Albert Einstein

Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom. Bertrand Russell

If we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future. Winston Churchill

Some alien blessing is on its way to us. William Stanley Merwin

Love liberates. Hate enslaves. One who hates the one who hates him or her has ceded victory to the original hater. The Author

Prologue:

The post-secondary school had selected a group of students with high academic grades, to take a series of occupational tests. They wanted to determine what the students were most talented in, so that they could select an appropriate career path. Two weeks later all except one were given their results clearly indicating their most appropriate vocation. Morris Edwards, the exception, was called into the Dean's office.

"Morris, we have gone over your test results and are totally confused by them. Your academic record is exemplary. You excel in every single course you have ever taken. Yet your test results do not give any indication whatsoever as to your best career path. We just do not know what to recommend."

"Perhaps, with your indulgence, I could take the vocational test again," Morris replied.

"We will take your suggestion under advisement and get back to you as soon as possible. I personally think that a reexamination is a very good idea and I will so recommend."

On a faraway planet, Edwige and Ferro were becoming exasperated with Juna, who they felt was a gadfly roaming around doing all sorts of mischief. His latest, the taking of an occupational series of tests on a primitive planet was the straw that broke the perennial camel's back. They decided to order him back to question him.

Juna jauntily walked into the chamber where Edwige and Ferro were impatiently waiting.

"On behalf of Ferro and our Council of Elders we would like you to explain your behavior. You are very well aware that you have broken just about every rule we have when we come into contact with aliens. You have been meddling in the affairs of the inhabitants of

the planet Earth for the last ten thousand of their years. Furthermore, we find that taking their occupational tests was a reckless waste of time. Why did you bother?"

Juna sat quietly for about a minute while contemplating his response.

"I am sure you are correct. I am guilty of occasionally and unintentionally breaking our cardinal rule of non-interference. I took the occupational tests simply because I wanted to determine the logic used when any one of the humans chose a vocation. I found nothing rational about their reasoning. The tests were downright nonsensical. Morris Edwards, the student whose body I inhabited, will be given a second test which will propel him into some profession, probably accountancy.

I am driven by an obsessive curiosity. As you pointed out, I have been studying the human inhabitants of planet Earth for the last ten thousand of their years. At the beginning I found a planet populated by barbaric savages. That state of affairs had remained static for a long time. It occurred to me that if I really wanted to understand these primitives, I would have to introduce a change into their existence. After all this is what most scientists do when studying physical, chemical or biological phenomena. They introduce a new factor into a situation to observe the result.

The first change was to present them to the wheel, their first real glimpse of technology and perhaps a grave error on my part, to be followed by many more. I then provided them with the notion of written communication which resulted in linguistic skills that I had not foreseen. Great literature and theatre was followed, unfortunately, by the most awful drivel.

I decided to acquaint them with the concept of the 'Law'. However this required a source and also the means to enforce laws. For the source I chose a fictional, all powerful, supernatural divinity. For the enforcement aspect I created the notion of the 'Nation State'. I did not foresee the consequences of these ideas. The former gave rise to a series of conflicting religions frequently at odds with each other, each absolutely sure that their version of the divine was the only accurate one. Thus the adherents of one religion too frequently felt that anyone not sharing their religious beliefs were blasphemous and sacrilegious and thus could be treated harshly. If anything, the Nation States were worse. Conflicts between them, morphing into horrific wars, broke out so often that the history of the peoples of their planet may be marked by these cataclysmic events.

I wondered whether there was a way to attenuate their savage attributes. I decided to introduce them to various aesthetic experiences: for instance, gourmet food for their sense of taste. Unfortunately, this gave rise to Junk Food. Great music quickly turned into loud noise. Beautiful examples of paintings, sculpture and jewelry evolved into hideous visual examples. Exotic perfumes frequently compromised their immune systems. Articles of clothing weaved of soft materials became ugly costumes. It was not all bad. The combination of some gave rise to inspiring eloquence, counterbalanced by invidious propaganda. In any case, while this effort on my part was not a total loss, it really did not soften their barbaric nature.

Perhaps my most serious error occurred when I imparted scientific and philosophic knowledge to them. This was done by inhabiting the bodies of a wide variety of sages such as Confucius, Buddha, Euclid, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Socrates, Aristotle,

Maimonides, Da Vinci, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Maxwell, Darwin, Planck, Marx, Smith, Einstein and many others too numerous to mention. In many instances their wisdom did rub off. As a result, however, frequently and unfortunately some extremely perilous technologies were developed such as nuclear armaments and space travel. I bemoan my intervention with that wild species and I regret even more my hopeless attempts at containing the damage already wrought.

A serious threat is afoot, not only to life on the planet Earth but also to all who reside in this vast universe. These beings are very dangerous mainly because they are power hungry and also because they view anything different from themselves as vile. The question then becomes as to what should be done. Should we eliminate them while we still have the capability to so do? I leave such a decision to you and our Council of Elders."

Edwige and Ferro found themselves in a quandary. Sadly, Edwige stated, "There is no way we could eradicate humanity, not because we do not have the means. We do. However, it would violate our code and system of ethics so grievously that we ourselves may not recover. Ferro, you may recall that we visited the planet Earth a long time ago. At that time, its highest form of life were apes. We were young, foolish and unwise. Motivated by the same scientific curiosity as Jena's, we decided to experiment. Using Recombinant DNA techniques we altered the genome of the most advanced of the apes. In essence, we created humanity. How can we destroy our very creation? How do we solve the dilemma of our moral responsibility in this sad case? We were arrogant and too sure of ourselves and our knowledge. We produced a monster species. If we destroy them, we will be guilty of crimes against natural laws. If we do not, our creation may come back to haunt and destroy us.

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