

RETRACING THE PAST TO PERCEIVE THE PRESENT**Anupama Sabhapathy**

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Abstract

Human species was evolved in the soils of Africa, several million years ago distinguishes itself uniquely from its predecessors. Of the several species, it has been the "Homo-sapiens" that has moved on by spreading out on the planet, adapting itself to the geographical vagaries and succeeding in utilizing the tremendous capacities of the human brain. The human instinct for survival, carried out through violence and Conquest. The human brain itself has systematically evolved making it one of the remarkable powers in the evolution process with a potential to change the destiny of the earth. Since the ages of the Cave Man, he has struggled for existence hunting for food, wandering away into unknown territories for survival and exploration. The human brain and body have evolved uniquely with the most profound insight in to the working of the universe. Man has undoubtedly achieved significant excellence in all d fields Conceivable. He discovered the use and meaning of sounds and evolved the strange and wonderful patterns of a thousand languages during these ages of hunting towards himself off from the dangers of the wild. The present paper focuses on how the human being has combat with the jungle animals for food by settling on the river banks and founding human civilization on firm grounds through farming.

Keywords: *Evolution, Archaeology, Anthropology, Genetics, Class, Culture, Religion, Human Species, Delineation, Race, Integration..*

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Man's struggle in the out and cold of nature's extremities must have led him to think of a life with less wandering where he could avail all the facilities and comforts near at hand. The human brain was contributing its capacities to man's adaptability for survival. It must have occurred to him somewhere during this process to lead a settled existence. The various tribes that spread out into different regions of the earth looked for suitable and strategic places and thus found the river beds as the most opportune areas for their settlements. The birth of civilizations on the various river banks almost during the same chronological time in history was setting the ground for big adventures and advancements in the field of science and technology of which they were absolutely without clues at that stage.

The decision to settle was one of the first steps towards the evolution of the creative potential of man. Nevertheless, this settled life also contributed equally to other complexities of the intriguing existence of man in relation to nature. On one hand he brought out his inner creative excellence of imagination, emotions and his love for nature through language, art and culture, but on the other hand, his intellectual abilities made him explore his maximum potential to surpass nature and establish his supremacy over her. The extremities of his struggle in his early stages of nomadic existence left him deeply initiated to combat nature through his intellect and physical prowess. His division with nature since then has witnessed great upheavals although his contribution towards the finer aspects of his harmony with his fellowmen and nature has been equally significant. To the extent that he associated himself as one of nature's creation, he reflected this in his transcendental practices of nature worship, music, dance, sculpture and various other forms of emotive expression that brought out his inner synchronization with the universe. However, his conscious awareness that he is intellectually superior, bestowed with a super powered brain that can shift to the Past, Present and the Future with immense speed made him assume his position as the Conqueror of all creation. His disintegration with his own kind

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due to ambition for power, fame and position delineated man from man so much so that humanity began to be divided into territories on the grounds of language, race, culture, religion, nation and so on.

Art and culture were created as expressions to integrate mankind through the finer attributes of the inner self of man that was harmonious with nature and was the manifestation of the power of the soul-force over the brute force. The human instinct for survival was carried out through killing and overpowering through violence and conquest. Man conquered and killed his own kind to establish his stature and it came to be believed that it was only the physically formidable who were powerful and fit to rule. Nature was taken to be another rival whom he had to combat and subdue. His power of intellect encouraged him to invent tools and gradually as he understood the physical laws of nature that operated the universe, he felt he was the master or even the Creator. The boons of Science are being majorly used to breed further violence through wars over nationalism, communalism and economic monopoly.

Science was intended to enlighten the intellect with knowledge founded on truth. The human brain and body have evolved uniquely with the most profound insights into the working of the universe from the smallest space of an atom to the vast outer space. Man's quest to interpret nature's mysteries had begun since the beginning of history. When the bi-pedals began to walk straight 400000 years ago, their free hands worked for them as extra limbs useful as tools to handle something. Simultaneously, a more evolved fixture of the brain and the throat enabled the development of language complexities supported by a complex central nervous system that had distinct regions for creative faculties and cognitive processes. These anatomical evolutions have been the keys for the tremendous understanding that we now have about ourselves and the universe. Philosophers since the time of Aristotle have ignited the search for truth by interpreting the physical world. This pursuit of truth was carried on generations of thinkers all over the world but most of the scientific revelations came from the western world particularly Europe which changed the basic understanding of the universe. Scientists like Galileo and Newton set the path for further exploration in the realm of science. Darwin's *The Theory of Evolution* and *The Origin of the Species* dismantled the theories of man as the supreme doing. He was given as a product of the evolutionary processes with better abilities than all his predecessors.

The questions that confront us today are, "Where have we taken the world today with all our mighty understanding of the universe and all the progress that we have achieved in the

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various fields of arts, philosophy and science and space research?” Was not every step of progress that we made an essential positive move to comprehend the purpose and destiny of our existence? Man has undoubtedly achieved significant excellence in all the fields conceivable but yet why does the future of this planet appear bleak? Why is there a fear of the lurking danger of the earth’s extinction? And what is the big role that man has played in the past few centuries that have put to stake all the path-breaking innovations of centuries of serious thinkers since the beginning of human history? Have we brought everything to a naught so that the world has to start all over again?

Firstly, the deep-seated ambition for the physical conquest of the world continued inspite of the civilized existence with cultural practices that brought about some neat order in every society all over the world. The spirit of adventure and the instinct to fight was still running deep which manifested itself in inter-tribal wars that later extended to territorial wars and now grown beyond all reasonable limits. The geographical boundaries that were created for identification of cultures and efficient functioning of the societies ironically turned out to be areas of contention that divided men on the very reasons of language, creed and race. The early man who spread out on earth adapted himself to his environment and generated physical and cultural characteristics that were unique and specific to that region and culture. Thus the world broadly came under the spectrum of the four races that were to determine the rest of the civilized societies. The domination of one of the races over the others has set forth the most unpleasant, meaningless racial wars that are tormenting mankind. And what is more is that all the nations draw immensely from the devastating potential of scientific creativity to further the destruction of this planet.

Nationalistic consciousness was aroused without a broader perspective of the entire humanity in large. Each nation vowed to safeguard its own interests and more so the interests of the ruling class whether the King or the State. Wars have been fought for territorial expansions to gratify the urge for power and dominance. What is sad and intriguing is the fact that scientists, whose, sole purpose had to be the illumination of the intellect for better existence of all life on earth deviated from their purpose and became the un-proclaimed gods of the modern world. Every fundamental universal law has been brilliantly interpreted and put into effect with the single ambition of killing. What scientist was it who invented the gun without the ambition of killing? And in the more recent years what scientists are they who structured the formula for the atomic disaster? Was this the world that was conceived by our predecessors at a time when

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electricity was still a non-reality and millions died in masses due to epidemics in the absence of advanced medical knowledge.

Secondly, along with the power of scientific inventions, the world saw the industrial revolution that went hand in hand with science. The consequence of this has been the commercialization of everything in the world. The world stepped into an era where the progress of a nation was assessed in terms of economic productivity, profits and losses from their trades. Industrialized nations naturally declared themselves as wealthy with the capital and technology to produce while the nations that were technologically behind became the markets of the producing nations. Peace and prosperity were assessed on the basis of material wealth and cultural aesthetics took a back seat. The world saw the emergence of new social and political orders along with the creation of the class-system that shook entire Europe setting the ground for revolutions. By the turn of the 19th century every nation was feverishly working to expand and dominate the world, an inner human urge that runs deep in the blood since the time of the first humans whose hunting spirit was now camouflaged with different explanations.

The hunting and the fighting spirit in man would have turned out fruitful if only he had attuned himself with nature and her order or existence. His adventurous heart would have yielded better satisfaction to all humanity if only he had regulated his greed and ambition and adhered to the principle of 'Live and Let Live'. It is the absence of this simple, life-preserving, ethical rule that has caused all the major wars which are a shame to humanity. The earth was made to be pleasant where all creation live in harmony and peace and prosperity. The visuals that we now have of earth are those of violence, blood-shed, brutality, crime and corruption. The major powers of the world have assumed the mighty roles of being Gods who can bring about order and peace when the essential link of equality among mankind is seriously missing or perhaps intentionally deleted from their mental contexts.

The super political powers of the world claim themselves as the decisive forces that can offer solutions to the crises of the world while the intellectual world the scientists in particular have astonishingly failed to transcend the physical nature of the universe to understand the real, deep metaphysical aspects that are crucial for the true meaning of our existence. It is a matter of grave concern that their intellectual capacities are not focused upon making the earth a better place by cleansing the weeds that have plagued it but instead, they are discovering new hunting grounds on the other planets and spatial objects to pursue and perpetuate their material interests.

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It is well-known that our moon is already piled with all the electronic garbage that has been dumped on it with every visit by the earthlings.

Amidst this confusion is the deep desire to redeem ourselves from the insanity that has possessed humanity for whom the earth is a more meaningful place than what it has become today. The world is torn between the might of the brute force and the patience of the soul-force. There should be some sanity restored before we all bring upon a catastrophe by choice. Obsessive racial, communal and religious sentiments are increasing alarmingly that the future holds a scary picture. If it is mere violence and terror that we are capable of passing on to posterity, it is time we stop and check ourselves of the legacy we have inherited through the relentless efforts of all our predecessors and own a sense of individual moral responsibility to bring down this anarchy that rules the earth now.

The tremendous advancement in knowledge that we now have about the working of the cosmos is significant to make us feel that man's existence in the process is miniscule considering the enormous, indomitable, unfathomable mysteries that the universe holds for us. It is revealed that every negative move by the humans is affecting the planet so much so that the harm carried out in the last few centuries has negated all the good that was contributed before. The dangers that we are meting out to earth are brilliantly criminal which suggests the absolute dysfunction of all our superior moral faculties. It appears as if all the efforts that have been carried out by all the great scientists, thinkers and visionaries were merely to inflict pain, violence, death and disaster and nothing else?

We need to stop all this mad rush somewhere and take time to ponder over what it is that we are driving at, at this speed. We have not only been exhausting all our resources but have been depleting it even at the cost of damaging the planet irrevocably. The major powers of the world are lost in self-glorification and the lesser ones inevitably are in loyal pursuit of their big bosses. Where do we regain sanity from in this self-destructive predicament?

The vast knowledge that we have inherited and the tremendous insights that we now have about the universe needs to be perceived from a different approach that is more in harmony with our outer space as well as the universe within every individual. The simple truth that we all need to know at the juncture is the balance that we strike between the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the individual. The laws of the universe operate on similar planes within the soul of an individual or the soul of the universe. One is not distinct from the other. It is merely

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the perception or the misperception that has thrown us apart from the centre. We need to return to our source, our original epicenter before the earth explodes into a million pieces as a fitting reply to all the havoc caused by one species, the humans.

What the world today is the syntheses of all knowledge and the unity of all the seekers of truth. No doubt information and scientific knowledge is expanding and exploding but at a loss of significant human values that are crucial for the survival of all life on earth. Man's monopoly over nature in the past few centuries has done an unprecedented damage whose consequences may not be avoided but can only be delayed. It is this hope and this awareness that at least when the world is at the brink of a major catastrophe, will the humans come together by setting aside differences of every kind and working towards a peaceful co-existence.

What then, are the ways that we can take up as responsible individuals to reduce the pace of the impending disaster and if possible, to avert it? In my understanding of it all, the three key players who can alter the destiny of the earth are:

- Firstly, our scientists who will do a lot of good to the universe if only they realize that, being the most gifted and intellectual beings, they are more accountable in determining and directing the course of the world events. If only they leave behind their national differences, racial distinctions, economic inequalities and come together to work towards a unified world order, can we have peace that has become increasingly so essential today. Certainly, our inventors can work with a more serious cause that brings the people emotionally, physically, economically, politically, culturally and spiritually together.
- Secondly, our political policy makers who are far removed from the practical problems of the common people should invest more time and effort in resolving the fundamental issues of food, water and shelter than invest in big enterprises and deals from which the common man derives no benefit for his day-to-day living.
- Finally, it is with us that the major responsibility rests. No power has proved superior to the power of the people in all our history. It is we, who must understand the importance and the joy of living together in peace and harmony. It is time that we realize that it is love that we need and not hatred, it is food that we need and not blood and it is life that we need and not killing and death.

The observation made by Stephen Hawking whose vision for a unified world is:

“We shall all, philosophers, scientists and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it that we and the universe exist. If we find the

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answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason- for then we would know the mind of God.”

Therefore, our purpose of existence lies in something beyond war and violence, death and destruction, greed and hatred. The legacy of knowledge that has been invested into our hands by all our predecessors is with the aim of making this world a better place so that we get the meaning of our life on earth.

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