



This is a collection of *essays, letters, poems and short skits*, which were written for my family and/or the Olli Follies.

## **Chapter 22: HUMANKIND – INTRODUCTION**

I'm taking this course from Coursea on our human history. It sounded quite interesting to me. I decided to document my own thoughts on these ideas to get them down firmly in my own mind (my mind being extremely slippery), and perhaps spread them about to stimulate the thoughts of others. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> in a series.

Caveat: There are controversial ideas presented. I hope you are sturdy enough of mind and temperament that you can withstand a few thoughts that may roil your belief system. And try not to mind if I misplace a few million years here or there. I confuse easily.

### **First: Where did it start?**

Some indescribable number of years ago (starting off, you have to believe in the concept of time – easy enough --- except for a few physicists), there was a Big Bang. (I know, I know – but a lot of very smart people seem to accept this, so let's go along with it for the sake of --- I don't know. Let's just ignore that and go on.) Here, for us, time and the

study of Physics began, with all the stupefying equations and ideas that are bound up in that mess. Something (?) blows up (why?) and its pieces fly off in all directions at tremendous speeds, continuously accelerating, due to some unknown force, if you believe that. (Yes, but it gets weirder. What was there before the alleged bang, assuming there was a before? And if so, what was it and how did it get there? Did God make it? And if so again, who/what made God? I don't think we need to go there yet, so let's just plug along.)

A few billion years go by and some pieces of this flying stuff apparently coalesce into atoms, bringing about the study of Chemistry. (Chemistry is a little more believable than the previous stuff. We can see or think we can see pictures of atoms, but still.) More eons pass and the atoms gather into molecules. (Getting more believable, huh?) The theory continues: Lots & lots of more time, the molecules fly together and we get stars by the billions, & planets, not so many. (We'll skip the simple explanation of this process.)

Among these celestial bodies is our star/sun with its adopted planets and associated debris. Now we're getting down to it. Our planet has some atmosphere trapped with it. Said atmosphere contains enough Oxygen, Hydrogen, etc. to provide the conditions for our kind of life to evolve (a very messy process, I would guess). Now we get Biology started with ferns, other greens, molds, creepy crawlies and more disgusting stuff that we don't need to get into.

In due course, various animals appear, and after a time, we get the family of great apes - gorillas, orangutans & chimps - Yea! OK, now were into the study of History: Pushing forward, stuff happens, the apes evolve (most likely females first, I would guess. Males being busy beating their chests, rushing through the brush with big sticks to intimidate other males, not to mention hitting on the hot lady apes. This wouldn't leave much time or energy for males to get much smarter, right? Case closed.)

Stepping back a moment, scientists, being anal creatures at heart, eventually name & classify all these creatures, and being scientists, they naturally use Latin names. (Don't ask.) The term Homo was chosen for the species that, by and by, became human. Apparently, the theory goes, a Mom great ape had 2 daughters, one founded the chimpanzees, and the other started off us humans. The chimps are our closest cousins, DNA-wise.

From these apes, starting around 3 ½ million years ago (but who's counting), came not one, not two, but at least 6 different Homo sub-species. How do we know this? Because scientists, poking their inquisitive noses all over the globe, into valleys, along rivers, in

remote caves, on islands, etc., found fossils of these different types with unique DNA's. They're still looking, so they may uncover hundreds more. But so far, they've found 6. Think about that – 6 different human species!

While you're thinking about your extinct cousins, I think I'll pause here, having run on enough for the time being. Obviously, this story goes on and on, raising as many questions as it answers, but that's for the next installment.