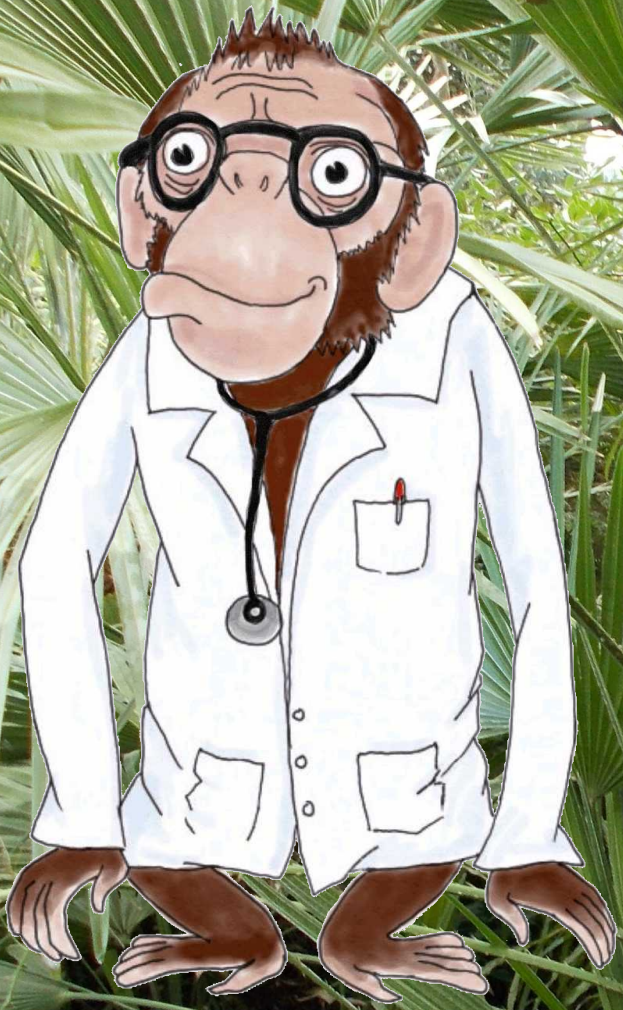
Erik Tantal

The Chimera

A story from the future

First Edition 2020



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Preface

The chimera is a creature from Greek mythology composed of various animals with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a snake's tail. Today for physicians and biologists it is an organism of genetically diverse cells. The following story originates from the near future. Possible similarities with living things or current affairs are purely coincidental.

The dream

Obviously this was the end of the worst. The heavy thunderstorm moved away sending its last rumbles. The downpour also stopped. Ideal conditions for a night's rest. But hot and moisty air still remained in the room. Sven quickly opened the window but right away closed it again because of the mosquitos. 'Why haven't I mounted the wire rack for the last week?' he thought. Unfortunately it was now too late. One beast had made it into the room. Sven was tired. Therefore he needed many starts to defeat the monster. Completely exhausted he fell on the bed.

As he fell asleep he was still followed by the buzzing noise of the insect, though he was quite sure he had successfully sent it to heaven. Yes, now he could be sure. Behind a white, thick cloud a great portal opened, the entrance to heaven. Over a vast meadow swirled giant swarms of gnats. 'Here I am', a gentle voice attracted him, and Sven thought he recognized 'his' recently killed mosquito. It did not seem to hold anger but danced with the others in the ascending whirl where millions of insects gathered.

In the middle of the meadow was a large video wall, at least ten feet high. This is where the current news was presented. 'I know that already', whispered Sven, because before he fell asleep, he had just watched the last messages. Now his dream presented the famous Japanese research project which realized the birth of a hybrid organism created from man and animal. This project was first allowed in 2019 to cultivate replacement organs for humans.

On the video wall different human organs appeared, one after the other, alongside faces of grinning rats, pigs and dogs in large format. Sven tossed and turned in the bed and sighed. Now the face of the announcer changed more and more. First the contours disappeared, the image was shaken, then her mouth turned to a beak. Her beautiful

hair was replaced by a giant deer horn. The announcer was no longer waving her arms but long tentacles, like those of an octopus.

Dripping with sweat Sven got up and sat down on the edge of the bed. The dream images were still visible. Never before had he experienced a dream like that. He was not aware that watching a news broadcast before bedtime could have this effect. Earlier in the day he had informed himself about the course in biotechnology. It was clear, he needed to report this dream to his fellow students. But first Sven had to calm down.

Ideas

Immediately after breakfast Sven he planned to continue reading the information of the Japanese research project. He wanted to deepen the conversation with his fellow students. Yes, the project was based on this brilliant new idea: Human stem cells were implanted into genetically modified animal embryos. These had lost their capacity to produce their own pancreas. Therefore, they should use the available human stem cells to form the missing organ.

After maturation, a pancreas, suitable as a human transplant, would be available. And there would probably be no dangerous rejection of the implanted organ. If that worked, the ongoing lack of organs needed for transplantation would disappear, wouldn't it? With those ideas in mind Sven thoughtfully strolled towards the coffee machine where he met Volker.

'Good morning, Sven, how did you master your first day?'

'Okay, but now my head is messed up. At the moment, I'm no longer sure if I have chosen the right course of studies', he replied.

'Are you crazy?' Volker was surprized. 'It's just the beginning, too early to resign! We have already planned to continue our careers in

Tokyo after a few semesters!'

'Ah, konnichiwa, you just want to cook rice with Sakura,' joked Sven. Both students had met Sakura yesterday during the briefing and hoped to meet her again this morning at the coffee machine.

It was Sven, who saw her first. He was pleased. He couldn't keep from smiling. 'Look out, she's here!'

Volker immediately rushed to the coffee machine. 'Do you like milk?' he asked and proudly served the coffee to his handsome fellow student, who of course was grateful. Volker casted a triumphant look at Sven. Of course, he had noticed that Sven was interested in her too.

'Now we are three. Let us start our discussion. It doesn't matter if there are some laggards. What do you think about yesterday's information?' Sven asked.

Eagerly, he waited for the first opinion. He did not plan to lead the round, but the discussion did not start so well. Volker looked a little confused and turned to Sven.

Sakura hesitantly hesitantly, 'What do you think? Yesterday we received good information. However, we are still too uninformed. I prefer to wait a bit for the next lectures and seminars.'

Sven needed an idea to improve the conversation about the common subject. That's why he started telling about his dream yesterday.

Volker was impressed and commented. 'Alas, that was certainly a nightmare.'

'I am glad that our famous researchers could make such an

impression on you. I normally have other dreams.' With that Sakura's assessment was quite different. She couldn't suppress a wry smile.

Sven demanded further objectivity. 'Yes, yes, but strange dreams could rather be a topic later tonight after a couple of beers. Now we have to discuss biotechnology, don't we?' However, the report about his dream caused a particular interest for Sakura. Due to her detailed studies about European culture she knew about the Greek chimera. The old fables still arouse fears. However, these do not provide an appropriate argument against the goals of the research project.

In Japan, only a few people declare their readiness to become post-mortem organ donors. Therefore, the number of transplants is very low, despite the urgent need. Consequently, Sakura could only welcome the experiments of the Japanese researcher and agreed with Sven, who had the same opinion. Only Volker remained skeptical. He pointed to various arguments against the method. Because of religious concerns, he could not approve experiments in which human and animal cells were compounded to cooperate in one organism. Furthermore, he was not certain that after transplantation there would not be unexpected side effects. Volker also referred to the giant number of animal experiments required for this method. In his view, researchers should be obliged to mind the welfare of animals.

Sven entirely understood Volker's arguments, though he did not want to give up so quickly: 'Yes, you're right. It's true, you really need a bigger number of animals for live disections. But what do you think about all the animals we slaughter daily for our nutrition! All efforts to reduce the consumption of meat have not succeeded at all! Indeed, it would be great if the required organs could be grown up in the laboratories. I believe, they've already begun to do that. But surely you'll have to wait a long time for any success.' Volker added: 'It would be even better if we could produce a clone for every human

being at birth. This could later be used as a backup organ stock. Haven't you watched the movie 'The Island' from 2005?

This 'horror movie' centers around the living conditions of the clones. These are forced to live in an isolated underground building under the pretext that the outside world is contaminated. To give some perspective and hope, however, the government claims that there is one island on earth which supports life. Of course with limited space. Thus, a lottery is held each week to select those who can then travel to that beautiful resort. Actually the lottery is just a fraud. Only those clones that are needed for organ transplantats are selected. 'So, now it is obvious that our Japanese scientists have come up with a more humane method', commented Sakura. Time was passing too quickly, the three fellow students decided to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

But Sven did not want to wait until this meeting. Biotech information was spinning around in his head. At home, he immediately continued to deal with this matter. The internet supplied him with a wide range of texts and videos about the Japanese research project. But it seemed, this method was not yet certain. The reported success only concerned experiments with animals. Genetically changed rat embryos were given stem cells from a healthy mouse. Later, they produced a pancreas with mouse features. These organs were then transplanted into mice with diabetes. The transplanted organs worked to the full satisfaction of the researchers. Perhaps, these experiments succeeded due to the very small genetic difference between rats and mice.

Online research

It wasn't easy keeping track. It was even more difficult to find the right time to stop the search. Sven had already experienced that during online research he often used up all his strength. Then he turned his attention to other interesting topics that appeared on the

screen. The search engine found more than 300.000 results for the word 'chimera'. First came informative texts explaining that the term originates from Greek mythology where the chimera appears as a menacing monster, with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a tail with a snake head.

For biologists, the chimera is an organism built up from cells of various creatures. This means that a person who has received a blood transfusion is also a chimera. But since transfused blood cells are disassembling themselves after a while, the status of a chimera exists only for a very short time. Another meaning of the term 'chimera' is 'illusion' or 'fantasy'.

The ongoing online research uncovered many indications of experiments by other scientists from around the world. In addition, there were also texts focusing on ethical issues. In particular, projects using ape embryos and human cells together were strongly criticized. But until now, these embryos have always been killed before birth. In many countries those experiments have been strictly forbidden. Sven soon realized that he would probably need many years to read all the texts. He clicked on the 'videos' search option and again was overwhelmed by the number of hits. He was now forced to go through additional difficulties as he always had to decide whether the information given was reliable or not.

Had there really been actual prototypes for the sculptures in Ancient Egypt that represent chimeras? Isn't the Great Sphinx in Giza just such a fantasy? Were the creators possibly even aliens? You cannot believe everything that is claimed by the author Erich von Däniken. But why do so many people pick up these ideas? Sven left these web pages and tried to focus again on more reliable sources. In any case, he now had enough material for the next conversation with his fellow students.

Sightseeing

'Isn't it a little too early? Do we really need to do practical training now?' asked Sven, reading the announcement at the university information board. 'That is a voluntary matter,' Volker reassured him, 'and we must be here only two days a week, on Mondays and Saturdays. This means we do not neglect our lectures'. So, there were no obstacles for registration. 'I'm sending Sakura some information, she must join too!' Sven remarked, but Volker stopped him immediately. 'She knows this already, I told her this morning.' Sven had difficulties not showing his frustration. He was too late again.

The IAE (Institute for Animal Experiments) was the most modern part of the university. In the middle of the entrance hall stood a model of all the buildings on a scale of 1 to 150. On the wall were large boards with information about all departments.

In spacious showcases lively mice, rats and rabbits romped around. The entrance hall and also many of the neighboring corridors were open daily and accessible to all. As a result the institute was a popular destination for class and family outings. The children enthusiastically pressed themselves to the glass viewing windows. It was not easy to convince them to continue the round tour.

The student group gathered in front of the building model and waited for their guide. It was Dr. Zan who first explained the new concept of the institute. Due to the numerous protests against animal experiments, the institute tried hard to create really favorable and correct conditions for the various species. Of course, it was impossible to spare the animals from any suffering, but everything was done to reduce it. Not only in the entrance hall but also in the corridors all animal enclosures offered almost paradise-like conditions.

But in the laboratories and operating rooms there was a different

atmosphere. Strange sterile cold prevailed, the first commandment for these areas was hygiene. Ordinary visitors had never been allowed to enter these rooms. However, it was possible for them to look inside because many walls had large windows. In front of each room posters showed the most important information about the current research results. Now Dr. Zan proposed that everyone walk freely through the corridors for the next hour. At the end of each corridor there was an employee who was ready to help if necessary.

Mojo

Later the guided tour continued in the primate department, which was located in the neighbouring part of the building. The primates also belong to the hominidae, like the orangutan, chimpanzee and gorilla. 'Why is this allowed? I thought experiments with hominidae have long been banned?' Volker asked. Dr. Zan, who had been waiting for that question, immediately replied: 'Yes, in principle you are right. But of course there are exceptions. And these are only approved if you take care for adequate reparation. Only a handful of institutions worldwide overcome this barrier. Our institute was successful. We keep our promise. For each primate which is used for research, we breed two new ones and later release them to nature. In addition, our institute supports protection and expansion of primate biotopes. We use large sums for this'. Proudly Dr. Zan presented colorful pictures from the jungle, almost the same view as the scenery behind the large glass windows.

Exotic trees, lianas, mosses, and ferns were acoustically accompanied by typical environmental sounds from loudspeakers. But no ape was to be seen. Dr. Zan explained: 'Our primates have many places to hide here. Furthermore,there are additional outdoor compounds behind the greenhouse. This is our grassland area. You can view the entire facility from the lookout point on the roof of our department.' The students immediately started to enjoy the view. Only Volker remained sitting on a bench in front of the glass window

of the jungle greenhouse for primates. The poster next door informed about the five inhabitants of that animal enclosure. One of them was genetically changed. It was two years old. After full maturity its heart was planned to be donated as a graft for a sick human being.

Volker looked around from tree to tree. Indeed, no apes were visible. Really? Suddenly something moved. A small chimpanzee raced from behind directly to the middle of the glass window. Then he squinted intently at Volker, who now also stared at his counterpart. The yellow sign in the left ear showed that this individual was destined for experiments. The poster by the window even announced the name: Mojo.

With his hands the little chimpanzee hit the window pane. Volker pressed his palms against the glass. 'Hello! Mojo', he greeted him with a clear pronunciation. Despite the thick glass audio communication was possible. Mojo immediately imitated the movement of Volker's lips. With his right hand he struck on his chest. It turned out that he understood the word 'Mojo'. He stared at Volker, his face showing an urgent question. He repeatedly touched the glass pane with his index finger and nodded.

Volker couldn't believe it. That little chimpanzee wanted to hear the name of his counterpart. Again with clear pronunciation and exaggerated movement of the lips the human visitor now introduced himself: 'Vol-ker, I am Vol-ker', to the delight of the chimpanzee. Mojo repeated the striking movements of his lips and slapped his hand against the glass again. Then he cheerfully jumped back and hopped several times in the same spot. In the meantime the student group returned from the rooftop viewpoint. That was obviously a nuisance for Mojo. He disappeared immediately to the back of the enclosure.

After the tour, the challenging hygiene program began. The students

were split up into separate work groups. To enter the interior rooms, special locks had to be passed. Then everone had to change clothes, followed by careful showering. The students were now allowed to put on the special white work suits. Each trainee looked like a Mars astronaut. Volker and Sven had to serve in the rats' section. As expected, the focus here was on food distribution and the cleaning of the enclosures, a common job for beginners. But Volker in his thoughts still remained in the primate department. He regretted that he was not allowed to work there now.

Doubts

'Are you satisfied with the first days of training at the institute?' asked Sakura. After the lecture, three new students joined the discussion group.

Elsa, who worked with Sakura in the mouse section, went along. 'Terrible! It was obvious, we should see only the good sides. They definitely need fresh troops. But I think the bitter end will come later.'

Volker took this up immediately. 'Yes, they only put on a big front. The perfect animal lands, as in paradise. Never think about the future fate of the inhabitants!'

'What do you expect? We are in the Institute for Animal Experiments. So, everyone knows the situation of the animals. However, it is not pointless to consider animal welfare', noted Sven and added: 'And today our lunch will be beef roulades with red cabbage. For sure tasty! I'm curious if any of you will take just a green salad.'

'Yes, yes, you're right. I mean, none of us is a pure vegetarian. Just my little sister.' Jens then pointed to Irené, who was sitting next to him.

'What's up with you, Irené? Are you really one of these non-meat eaters?' asked Sakura.

Then Jens told them about his grandfather who had a large rabbit hutch in the garden: 'As children every time we visited our grandfather we took the bunnies in our arms, we fed and caressed them. And once, before Christmas day, Grandpa brought a slaughtered rabbit, the innards removed. He gave it to our mother telling us, “This was Mukki, who you always had a great time with.” From that day on Irené never ate meat again.'

'What a bad grandfather! What a terrible ruthless old man!' Sakura cried. Compassionately, she took Irené's hand, squeezed it firmly and asked: 'But why did you choose this course of studies? You should refuse any animal experiment!'

Indeed, Irené really had doubts. Perhaps, it was the wrong decision. On the other hand, she really wanted to study something related to medicine.

Sven tried to cheer her up a little. 'You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. What did you plan for this afternoon? Will you join us at the sports hall? The seminar will only last until three o'clock'. Only Volker couldn't get excited about sports and proclaimed: 'I'm going to the primate department!'. Sven reacted with great astonishment: 'Why there? Today there is no practical training!'

Games

Immediately after the seminar Volker went to the institute and sat down on a bench in front of the chimpanzee enclosure. There was a lot of activity now. Contrary to the situation last time, all five chimpanzees showed up. The whole ape family left the rear areas and searched every millimeter of the soil even in front of the glass windows. The animal keeper just threw grapes onto the ground. Such

a delicacy did not appear every day.

'Ah, here's where you have fled to. Now I know. You'll probably want to change your university subject'. Irené didn't go to the sports hall either. Why did Volker go to the primate department? She followed him curiously.

'Yes, eventually ethology, study of animal behaviour, would be good, wouldn't it? See how the chimpanzees struggle to find the grapes!' On the left there are the parents, they are used for breeding. The little one on the right is Mojo. Someday he'll be an organ donor. His heart will be taken for a transplant.' Volker replied in a low voice.

'What about the others?' Irené asked

'These two will be released into the wild someday. They are probably the luckiest.' Volker has been well-informed beforehand.

In the meantime delicacies could no longer be found. The chimpanzees gradually disappeared to the rear areas. Only Mojo stayed. He crouched in front of the middle of the window and drummed his right hand on the glass. Volker approached him calling, 'Mo-jo, Mo-jo.' Imitating Volker's lip motions Mojo struck his breast with his right hand. Then he touched the glass and pointed to Volker. As he did he moved his lips with exaggeration. Nothing could be heard, but apparently he was trying to say the name ‘Volker’. Now Irené was approaching the glass too. She looked him straight into the face. Mojo immediately reacted. He pointed a finger at the glass and fixed his eyes exactly on Irené. He nodded his head several times, reinforcing the slaps on his chest. Irené now understood that he wanted to hear her name. She slapped her chest with her hand and said,

'Yes, I am I-re-né, I-re-né.' Instantly the chimpanzee imitated her lip

movements. He turned back and jumped with joy. That joy, of course, also captured the two students. Volker nodded and continued his attempts to contact Mojo. He struck the glass with his fist. Mojo reacted quite unexpectedly. He did not imitate the fist. He showed his open hand. Volker didn't understand, and he was unsure what to do. But Mojo didn't give up. He now alternately with his right hand showed his fist or his palm. Irené also participated in sign language communication and imitated the closing and opening of the hand. Doing so, she unconsciously spread her fingers.

Mojo jumped back and laughed excitedly. He opened his mouth widely, showing his teeth and breathing heavily. He alternately struck his chest with his right fist or palm. He did this with his left hand too, but with that hand he spread his fingers. He repeated the whole sequence of movements several times.

'Does he want to give us three signals?' Volker now also repeated these movements with the same rhythm as his fist, palm and palm with extended fingers.

Irené shouted. 'Stone-paper-scissors! He wants to play stone-paper-scissors! He wants to play with us! Ching- Chang- Chung! You know that too, Volker!'

Incredible. That was the solution. The little chimpanzee wanted to play with them. Surely he had learned that game from other visitors, certainly children. Due to the natural shape of his hand, he was of course unable to show the sign 'scissors' with just two fingers. Instead, he simply offered the palm of his hand with outstretched fingers. To start the game he used even acoustic controls. Those were difficult to understand. However, instead of 'Ching-Chang-Chung' came something like 'Kik-Kak-Kuk', so clicking sounds. And Irené had to concentrate very hard not to lose against Mojo. Every time he won, he jumped merrily back and hopped up and down with a laugh.

Volker shot a few sequences of that game with his smartphone. But as soon as Mojo realized this, he interrupted the game. He now pressed his whole face against the glass and struck it with both hands. What did that mean? He reacted even more excited when Irené also released her smartphone. Mojo turned his right hand now alternately to the two devices. During this he restlessly raised and lowered his upper body. Was that a sign that he was trying to prevent filming and photography?

Smartphone

'Ah, Mojo, he just wants to have that kind of toy too.' Volker and Irené turned in astonishment. It was the animal caretaker's comment that they heard. He had come to start his shift and introduced himself to the two students.

'Hi, I'm Tim. I have been working in this department for a long time. It is great that our students come now even when there are no official events, just to see our animals'.

'He really wants a phone?' Volker was surprised.

Tim nodded. 'Whenever a visitor takes out his smartphone, Mojo goes crazy. I think, some time or other, we will have to give him one.' 'Well, then let's do it!', Irené jumped in. 'If that's okay, I can bring my old phone tomorrow.'

Tim agreed but he added: 'Well, yes, but that means more work for me again. I'll have to build a tiny box with connection to the board to charge the device. I hope your old smartphone can at least be charged wirelessly.'

The next day Irené brought a smartphone and handed it to Tim. He had worked hard and finished the box in time, including the charging options. The box even had a little door and lock with a tiny keyboard.

Tim put the smartphone into the box and demonstrated the service to Mojo. He only needed one 'lesson'. Mojo immediately understood everything. He used the three correct keys to open the door without problems. Curious, he looked into the box, grabbed the smartphone and held it up triumphantly. He jumped joyfully and hopped.

This was the end of communications between the student and Mojo. The chimpanzee boy did not want to play or keep in touch today. A little disappointed Irené left the institute and told Volker: 'Now we can leave him alone. He does have a smartphone. Maybe we'll visit him tomorrow.' But during the next few days it was not possible to resume contact. Only with fresh grapes did they manage to lure Mojo away from the device. Every evening Tim then put the smartphone into the box and closed the door. Mojo had yet to learn that from time to time the battery had to be charged. But how to explain that to him? Little by little Mojo got used to the evening smartphone pauses. But for that he always needed grapes.

During the break after the lecture the little student group met again in the 'coffee corner'. Everyone had heard the news about the smart chimpanzee. Volker and Irené didn't get a chance to enjoy the drink. All the time they had to report about their observations. Sven intervened: 'Well, if Mojo doesn't want to play with you anymore, there's no reason to neglect sports. Leave him alone and come with us!'

Learning progress

Three weeks! Irené and Volker could hardly stand the situation anymore. Three weeks without Mojo! 'I think it's time to contact him again, what do you think?' asked Volker. But Irené had another idea. She had customized the smartphone so that Mojo could easily access games, pictures and videos. She drastically blocked the option for dialing, so that the device only had one contact – her own phone number. Now she could call Mojo directly. She hoped Mojo would

find the right button to reply.

In fact Mojo accepted the call. But he held the smartphone too close to his face. That's why Irené couldn't recognize him on his device. But Mojo certainly saw the image of Irené. Irené called: 'Hi Mo-jo, Mo-jo, Mo-jo. It's me, I-re-ne! '. Apparently Mojo got that too. As a result, Irené's screen chaoticly flared up and showed only changing fragments of pictures. Nothing was recognizable. But it was certain, Mojo couldn't help but dance happily with the device. Irené repeated the call 'Mo-jo, Mo-jo, Mo-jo. It's me, I-re-ne! '

For a few minutes nothing happened. Volker regretted not having gone directly to the institute to observe Mojo's reaction. At that moment it was incredibly audible:

'I-re-ne, I-re-ne! Kik- Kak- Kuk!

What was that? Who had answered now? Was that the animal caretaker? Again the well-understood message was repeated:
'I-re-ne, I-re-ne! Kik- Kak- Kuk! '

That was Mojo. Did he now have the right anatomical basis for speaking? Anyway, for the past three weeks he had really learned to do that. Now his face could be recognized on the screen. It turned out that this little chimpanzee was holding the smartphone in the right position.

'Come on, we need to be there. I cannot believe it!', Volker called, and they ran to the primate-corridor.

In the enclosure for the chimpanzees Tim began to scatter grapes. Then he suddenly saw the two students coming into the corridor.

'I haven't seen you in a long time. Has anything happened?' he asked.

Volker gasped and replied: 'Yes, but you won't believe it. Mojo can talk now! '.

Tim did not trust his ears and said: 'You are hallucinating. I haven't noticed anything like that yet. Mojo is plays all day with the smartphone and I have to try my best to take it off him in the evening. Yes, sometimes he screams terribly but that cannot be called speech.'

'Wait, I want to test something,' Irené approached the window pane and pointed her smartphone at Mojo. She lured him with the words: 'Mo-jo, Mo-jo, I am I-re-ne, I-re-ne'.

A picture of an apple appeared on the screen of her smartphone. She also sent this photo to Mojo's device, who immediately recognized the fruit. He struck the pane with his right hand. His lips now fluttered. Then he started with a clear pronunciation 'Ap-ple, ap-ple'. Obviously Mojo himself had been practicing the pronunciation of that word in recent weeks. Certainly he had been using the game he found on the device. But that didn't matter. It only mattered that he could now really speak. Irené later showed other images: tree, stone, grapes. Each time Mojo spoke those words correctly.

Tim couldn't believe it and called: 'We need to inform Professor Brundt, the head of our institute, immediately! It's a sensation! '

I called the spirits

The news about this sensation did not only reach the professor. Volker and Irené informed the entire student group who of course spread the message further. So it was not surprising that a phone call from a well-known journalist arrived early the next morning. He wanted to interview Volker. Volker, who had no experience in such matters, indicated to him that Prof. Brundt would probably be a better candidate for that. Regardless of this, the news about Mojo

rapidly widespread, so that the next day various newspapers were writing about it. Huge headlines adorned the articles. There were also reports of Volker and Irené, even with photos. No one knew who had been responsible for those publications.

At the meeting of the local animal protection group this topic was also discussed. 'Now I've finally got some good arguments,' the speaker proclaimed on the podium, adding: 'We hope we will find enough supporters against these transplant organizations now. Let's free all animals from captivity right away!'

There was considerable dispute over this proposal. Most opposed the idea of growing chimpanzees as potential donors. But some agreed if other animals were to be used. Only a few activists advocated violent actions. Sven presented a completely different idea: 'Before deciding too quickly, we need to analyze why this happened. How is it possible that a young chimpanzee suddenly talks?'. Irené reported on the chimpanzee boy's extraordinary intelligence. She talked about his behavior. The description of the 'Ching-Chang-Chung'-game especially made everyone extremely curious.

Dr. Zan, who also attended the meeting, explained: 'As an IAE-representative, I want to help you understand. Our goal of growing an animal with an organ suitable for subsequent transplantation relies on genetic technology. We create an embryo that initially loses the ability to form a specific organ. We then need to insert human stem cells into that animal embryo. These enable the embryo to produce an organ which the human recipient would not reject after transplantation. During the planning of these experiments, there were often contradictory statements from scientists who warned of unwanted side effects. But no one believed them. I also never imagined that the stem cells not only care about the growth of the target organ but also affect the development of other organs of the animal. Because of this, the chimpanzee was given the anatomical

basis for speech. Certainly the brain was also affected.'It was not possible to end the discussion about this topic. Due to lack of time it was decided to continue the meeting the next week. Everyone now knew that there was at least one animal in the institute that had more human traits than previously planned.

Sven remembered Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' [*], which he had to memorize at school. There he could read: 'I called spirits but now I cannot get rid of them'.

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[*] Der Zauberlehrling

Kidnapping

The news about the chimpanzee boy spread like wildfire. As always, in such events, there were people who wanted to take advantage of the situation. Certainly there were circus owners who would gladly introduce the talented ape during their parades. In military circles it was debated whether this smart chimpanzee could be put into action. Eventually it could also be a suitable candidate for space travel.

'We will start tomorrow,' demanded Bodo. He was sitting with Herbert in an inn. They were talking about a new, great masterplan.
'Let's leave that, our last attack was a complete failure, we just left prison. Why are you planning this again?' Herbert asked.

But Bodo ultimately convinced him. This time it would be a completely safe thing, kidnapping that super chimpanzee. They found a good place outside the city, in a quiet village. A safe stall could be installed there to lock up the chimpanzee. Then they would just wait.

Bodo boasted: 'We will definitely get plenty of ransom money. In addition, we will offer to sell this ape to other stakeholders. We have

good contacts. Just wait, we'll succeed anyway! '

The black uniforms of some security service gave the impression that both fraudsters were professionals. Herbert ran the vehicle, a small van for safe money transport. With falsified documents they entered the institute and handed the papers to the gatekeeper.

They had figured out the time, when the responsible animal caregiver would have his break. They used a wheelbarrow to transport the large box. The gatekeeper had no suspicion whatsoever, so the duo could easily pass. Then everything happened quickly. Herbert opened the lock to the chimpanzee with the key he had previously cared for. He threw a lot of grapes on the ground. It only took a few minutes and the whole chimpanzee family came to the front area.

Bodo immediately narcotized little Mojo and placed him in the box. The latch door was locked correctly. Both said good-bye to the gatekeeper and pushed the wheelbarrow to the freight car. The whole action took less than fifteen minutes. Enough time befor the animal carekeepers returned from their break.
'Didn't I predict that? It was all very easy,' boasted Bodo. Herbert drove the van to the suburban hideout. No one followed them. The prepared cage was waiting in a shed on an abandoned farm. No one would visit that place.

After two hours Mojo woke up and noticed that he was no longer in the institute. He sprang up and shook the lattice and the cage door forcefully, but without success. Herbert tried to calm him down by shoving a plastic bottle with water into the cage. Mojo immediately threw it out. He aimed at Bodo but missed him.

'Let him shout. Here, in any case, nobody hears him,' suggested Herbert.

Bodo repeated: 'Yes, you are right, but the screaming really bothers me. What do you think? Shall we give him some more grapes? '

It turned out that there were no more grapes. Mojo, meanwhile, understood very well that his shouting was a severe annoyance to the duo. So he continued shouting.

Bodo capitulated: 'I can't stand it anymore. Stay here and take care of him. I'm now going to the supermarket to buy some grapes. Be careful, Herbert!'

That was exactly Mojo's plan. Now only one guard remained. Mojo continued his shouting. During this he sometimes called out: 'Hunger! Hunger'. Herbert was frightened. He knew that the chimpanzee could speak, but he had never heard it before. The fact that a chimpanzee could shout like a human being of course made him terrified. Hastily he searched his backpack and found another banana. Before he could throw it into the cage, Mojo suddenly collapsed. He fell like dead to the ground and did not move anymore.

Herbert didn't know what to do now. Was all the stress too much for this ape? Was it a heart attack or just a faint? Bodo would be back in about ten minutes. Herbert had to decide for himself. Carefully he unlocked the door and approached Mojo pointing the taser at him. 'Take good care of yourself. Don't risk too much', he thought and touched Mojo's shoulder with the weapon. Mojo didn't respond. Herbert now took the banana with his other hand and held it before Mojo's face. The chimpanzee boy had been waiting for this very moment. He opened his mouth wide and with all the force of his jaws rammed his massive teeth into Herbert's lower arm. Herbert cried out in pain and was unable to use the weapon. Mojo grabbed Herbert's head with both hands and pushed it against the metal lattice and continued biting until Herbert finally remained lying on the ground.

Mojo left him in the cage and locked the door. He removed the key and threw it high out of the window. Then he ran outside. Where to? It was too dangerous on the street, for Bodo would surely return soon. He ran along the street, through the fields, behind bushes or buildings.

Finally he reached the village boundary. A small circus tent stood there on the great square in front of the village entrance. Nearby were the caravans and cages. One of those cages even housed a little monkey, who, seeing Mojo, immediately screamed. The whole circus team came together.

'I'm sure, this is our super chimpanzee,' one of the co-workers noted. Another proposed: 'Very good, he would be very suitable for our next performance!' The others had the same idea.

Mojo only heard 'Let's catch him!' and he was already in a cage again.

Exhausted from the first escape, he collapsed. Pepe, the circus tamer, sneered: 'What a weakling! Just give him something to drink and a peach as a reward.' But Mojo crouched motionless on the floor of the cage, his head bowed, both arms hung limply. Even a juicy peach couldn't cheer him up.

‘Leave him alone for now. Tomorrow he will be alive again, and then we can start training him,' Pepe said. Mojo didn't notice, not even that everyone was leaving. He had fallen asleep with exhaustion.

Next morning Donka was the first to visit the cage. The circus owner’s eight-year-old daughter was playing with her new, colourful umbrella. She stepped back and forth in front of the cage pressing the tip of the umbrella against the bars. At the clicking noise Mojo awoke. Frightened, he got up. That noise was unbearable for him.

'Stop it!' he cried aloud. Donka immediately paused. She did know this chimpanzee could talk, but she didn't want to believe it. Now she actually heard that.

'Forgive me,' she murmured softly. 'I didn't mean to scare you.'

Then she sat down on the floor in front of the cage and shamefully pushed her new umbrella through the bars. At first, Mojo didn't react at all. But suddenly he noticed, this girl was crying.

'I really didn't want that,' she sobbed barely audibly. Mojo came closer to the cage grid, put his hand through the bars and caressed Donka on the shoulder.

'Do you want to help me?' he asked quietly.
Donka winced and jumped up. 'Yes, I'll call my father right now and tell him everything. He'll surely help you.'

Donka's father was away for a few days because he had to arrange something in the city. His co-workers had not yet informed him about the chimpanzee. Astonished, he took his daughter's call.

'What's going on, my little one? Why are you calling so early? You usually never do that.'

She now started and speaking faster and faster and reported everything to his father. She even begun to cry and shouted 'Can't you release him? We do have enough animals here!'

Pepe heard this and immediately took Donka's mobile phone. 'Give it to me! Don't interfere! The chimpanzee will stay here! I'm talking to your father now.'

Yet the circus tamer could not convince him. For the owner of the

circus it was a matter of honour to return Mojo to the institute. So, Mojo now had enough support for the road home.

Tennis

Five years later.

'Hurry up,' Sven urged. He was now engaged to Sakura and had bought tickets for the big tennis tournament.

'I don't know if it was a good idea to get tickets for Volker and Irené as well. They are only interested in their work,' complained Sakura.

Sven couldn't suppress a smile: 'Just wait, you'll see soon.'

But today they had to wait really long. They stood in front of the entrance to the stadium and the pair had not yet arrived. Finally, in the last minute, they appeared.

'We're sorry we're so late.'

Unfortunately Volker needed a little longer to finally make the right decision, to go to the tournament. But anyway thank you very much for the invitation.' Irené apologized.

'Who is competing today?' Volker asked looking bored. He had only come because Irené insisted.

Sven smiled slyly: 'Just wait, you'll see.'

Almost all of the ten thousand seats of the stadium were occupied. Sven directed his group.

'Come on, we have to go to the grandstand, we have reserved the blue seats.'

Huge letters appeared on the big screen:

MOJO vs. MAT STEVENS

Now Volker was finally awake. To this day, he hadn't really noticed that Mojo was not only the clever super chimpanzee but also a brilliant tennis player. Due to the rules of the international tennis league, he was not allowed to participate in normal tournaments. But since he played tennis so well, he was invited as a guest to the most important tennis events. Here he played mainly at the beginning and the end of the championship. Usually his opponents were 'Number One' and 'Number Two' in the world rankings. But really, these good tennis players never had a chance to win against Mojo. Mojo’s appearance always guaranteed stadiums a fairly large audience.

The two tennis players had entered the field. All the spectators rose and began to shout loudly. Only one word could be understood: MOJO! Mat Stevens tried to get a little more attention and so in turn raised and lowered his arms – without success. As expected, the next game was a failure for him too. A similar show took place at the end of the tournament. Mojo also defeated the world's best tennis player. 'Truly Mojo is indeed the Number One', said Volker respectfully.

Career

At age seven, the chimpanzee super-kid was on a career path up. He had obviously not reached the top yet. Mojo's first spoken words aroused the attention of the researchers, who immediately recognized his potential. 145, that was Mojo's intelligence quotient. The institutional administration immediately decided to remove him from the transplant program. Now a lot of educators and ethologists took care of him.

Mojo's great talent was shown by the fact that he started speaking in sentences very early. In addition, he mastered the basics of

arithmetic, writing and reading. He got a powerful laptop. With this device he further improved his knowledge. Mojo was also in good physical shape. He was extremely athletic. He received his International Baccalaureate Diploma at the age of eight and then planned to study genetic engineering. Long-time animal keeper Tim was now his constant personal companion. As a manager, Tim not only organized Mojo's participation in tennis tournaments, but also made the right contacts with the media.

The IAE gradually abandoned the projects for the production of transplant organs. Nobody wanted to be responsible for a pig or sheep suddenly speaking to its scientists or an animal gaining awareness comparable to that of a human. Hence, the institute was looking for alternative ways. Cell cultures were increasingly experimented with to grow organs suitable for transplantation.

Mojo maintained contact with the institute and continued the collaboration with Prof. Brundt, who supported him during his studies and even provided him with the entire department of primates. In addition to his studies, he was allowed to do his own research. After three years of study, he received his doctorate and was now entitled to be called Dr. Mojo. His work focused on analyzing the genes of his chimpanzee family. He tried very hard to examine the genes of his own cells and compare them with those of humans.

Incident

Envy is the bitter enemy of success. Dr. Mojo also had to experience this.

Especially after taking over the management of the primate department, many researchers did not like the decision that their head was now this new doctor. In most cases, they did not dare to criticize openly. It was only heard behind the scenes that many could not get

used to the idea of having a chimpanzee as a boss. Terrible articles appeared in the newspapers, which were greedily picked up by Mojo's opponents. Many were just waiting that Dr. Mojo would make a grave mistake.

But Dr. Mojo made no mistake. On the contrary, his scientific research received the highest praise from all the specialist circles. There were also no problems in his department for primates anymore. Everyone was delighted with the chimpanzee family's successful growth. The institute was already able to release several apes into the wild.

Until one afternoon something happened. The animal keeper on duty did not close the gates in the correct order. Some chimpanzees took this opportunity. They escaped and fled through the corridors. Fortunately, all chimpanzees except two were caught again. But the two refugees successfully reached a good hiding place and were initially not found.

You can imagine the headlines which arose from this incident:

MONSTER APES ESCAPING!
CHAOS IN DR. MOJO'S DEPARTMENT!
ATTENTION: THE CHIMERA!

Of course, like so often, the articles were exaggerated and wrong. The two refugees were by no means chimeras. And of course there was no chaos just because two animals escaped. However, the incident gave cause for concern. Hundreds of people spontaneously demonstrated and marched to the institute.

The demand CLOSE THE INSTITUTE! was written on large banners. Long reports of these demonstrations appeared in the media. As a result the protests lasted even longer. People came to the

institute every day for several weeks. They showed their banners and blocked the entrance.

It didn't help that the two refugees were successfully caught in just three days. The turmoil continued to grow. On a Friday a group of demonstrators gathered ready for violence. They hurried to the institute and destroyed almost every facility in the entrance area. They even entered the corridores for mice and rats. Fortunately, the other parts of the institute were better protected. The police arrived quickly and were able to prevent even worse attacks.

Research results

The places in the seminar room of the institute were completely filled. All research staff came together. Professor Brundt stood at Dr. Mojo's side and greeted the audience. The only item on the agenda was the report on the latest research from the primate department.
Dr. Mojo started:

I have finally understood the main differences between human DNA and chimpanzee's. The cells in my body are indeed partially human. There are still many interactions between the two cell types. This is also recognized by the activity of the genes. I am sure we can now manipulate chimpanzee egg cells precisely by inserting human genes. Of course, my research focuses primarily on the goal of giving our fellows the ability to speak. This inevitably leads not only to changes in the brain that affect consciousness. There are also important changes in anatomy. That happened in my body. For this reason, I now have human-like organs that make it possible to speak.

You know the stem cells, inserted into me in the embryonic state, caused exactly these effects. But as a chimera, I cannot pass on the new skills to my future children. The only way would be to use a modified chimpanzee egg for breeding. With a female chimpanzee carrying such an egg, not only me, but also every other male

chimpanzee with the new properties could produce offspring, of course only through artificial insemination. It is clear, the next generation would no longer need this method. The reproduction then takes place naturally again.

This speech was a sensation. An excited discussion followed. The most common objections were raised against the germline intervention. Manipulation of human gametes had been strictly rejected by most researchers.

However, Dr. Mojo pointed out that the previous ban on germline intervention only applied to humans. Despite his chimeric existence, which he was clearly aware of, he always felt like a chimpanzee. Germline interventions were not prohibited for chimpanzees. This was followed by another sharp exchange of arguments. As a result, the institute's management was too afraid of the public's reaction. Finally, all financial support for Dr. Mojo's research was stopped.

New beginning

It was only a matter of time. Dr. Mojo saw no other way to continue his research at this institute. Together with a number of institute employees, including Dr. Zan and Tim, the former animal guardian, he decided to establish his own institute abroad, on the island state of Salapaku of course. The conditions were ideal there, and not only related to the climate, but especially for free research.

Despite important differences of opinion, Mojo stayed in contact with Prof. Brundt. The well-known medical company 'Sanglobe' supported the planned project financially. Therefore, even Mojo's wish to include all the chimpanzees from the former department could be realized. Dr. Mojo continued to work for science into old age and received worldwide praise. He died at the age of sixty-six, a very old age for chimpanzees.

Mojo's children

One hundred years later.
Malapaki, the capital of the island state of Salapaku, had changed a lot. You could no longer recognize the cityscape.

There was construction everywhere. Near the airport, many new hotels blocked the view of the beautiful beach. Most of the tourists gathered here. The IHT, the large institute for health technology, also counted a record number of visitors every year. The institute had been founded by Dr. Mojo based on the model of the old IAE Institute.

In the entrance hall, the imposing enclosures for the animals were behind huge glass windows. The corridors of most departments were freely accessible to visitors. There was also a lot to admire here. Even a department for primates attracted visitors. And what was really new, the special enclosure for humans. They lived there normally but behind glass. Everyone could watch them. Of course, as in the other enclosures, the residents always had the opportunity to retreat to the hidden back rooms.

Compare the enclosures of humans with those of the primates! What a contrast! Here the residents are in a completely technical environment. Wherever human beings lived, there were devices and built objects. Only a few houseplants adorned the rooms. In contrast, the chimpanzees lived in a completely natural environment. There weren't even human toys like balls.

And outside, in the corridor in front of the exhibits, the visitors stared: humans next to chimpanzees. But is that really the name for these human-like apes? They spoke like humans. They were talking to humans! They were the descendants of 'Mojo's children', the chimpanzees who were born more than a hundred years ago through the artificial fertilization of genetically modified chimpanzee eggs. In

particular, of course, not all of them were his own descendants. He had paid particular attention to genetic diversity when selecting the stem cells. Therefore he chose many different egg cells. Only the genetic sequences responsible for the new traits came from his own body, which also contained human cells. He was a chimera. This human genetic information was ultimately important for the chimpanzee's new capabilities. The speaking chimpanzees were now given the name 'Panhoms'. From the outside, they looked like chimpanzees, indistinguishable from the normal species.

Today, around two hundred panhoms live in Salapaku together with humans. Their relationship can be called a symbiosis. The panhoms like to use the artificial houses because they are not good craftsmen. On the contrary, because of their superior intelligence, they often occupyd high-paid positions in scientific and educational institutions. For example, it is almost self-evident that the IHT chief is a panhom. But there are also less intelligent representatives. In one area, however, they are always invincible. Like her great-grandfather Dr. Mojo, they all are very good at playing tennis.

There was even a sport that was previously only found on Salapaku: 'field tennis'. In this sport two teams with four players fight each other. Each player may only move the ball with his tennis racket. The goal is to catapult the ball over the net that divides the field. Six tennis clubs competed in the capital. So far, of course, the winning team has always been from the Panhom's Club.

Over the years, the IHT has developed into the world's leading center for genetic engineering. Not only the Sanglobe group benefited from this. IHT and Sanglobe were the largest employers on the island. Research requests came from all over the world. The main tasks were testing new drugs using specialized cultures of genetically modified cells. The researchers were also involved in the cultivation of transplantable organs. The problem has not yet been solved, but the

IHT has found a promising method. The researchers recently successfully cultivated a rabbit liver in the laboratory. This artificial organ was used for transplantation. It replaced a liver in a rabbit that did not reject this transplanted organ. It has been working without problems in the rabbit patient's body for two years now.

T H E E N D

Interview

The author Erik Tantal spoke to Dr. Tatu from IHT:

Erik: Panhoms and humans work together in your institute. Have you ever heard of problems?

Dr. Tatu: No, I've never heard anything like that. However, it is clear to me that the collaboration is mainly about working together at the institute. However, the various groups rarely meet in their free time.

Erik: That means there are no meetings for a glass of beer after work, is there?

Dr. Tatu: Yes, it seems so. Of course humans and panhoms have different preferences. But relatively often, there is a common participation in sporting events.

Erik: You definitely are referring to tennis and field tennis, right?

Dr. Tatu: Of course.

Erik: Are you really planning further development of the panhoms through new genetic modification?

Dr. Tatu: We are still arguing about this question. My suggestion to give panhoms a more human hand is firmly rejected by many of my peers. To this day, we panhoms still have the same physical characteristics as our ancestors. But with an improved hand we would eliminate many disadvantages compared to humans.

On the other hand, this would of course lead to a major change in our way of life. The shape of our current hand facilitates climbing. And this is incredibly important for our life in a natural environment. However, our hand does not allow the use of tools so well. I confess

that I too don't know how we will decide in the future.

Erik: And what do you think about further changes in your genes? Couldn't such procedures lead to a future superiority of the panhoms to humans?

Dr. Tatu smiled.

Dr. Tatu: Ah, you are afraid that we will outperform you not only in tennis. Honestly, I can't judge that. In my experience, panhoms and humans live in a symbiosis, fruitful on both sides. And, even if there is further progress in the future, there is certainly no need to worry. We are indeed a minority for a very long time.

Erik: What do you think of genetic interventions in your germline that use non-human genetic information?

Dr. Tatu: This is just utopia. Surely you are thinking of using the genes of the birds. I think it is not necessary for us panhoms to have wings either. We really benefit from the technical advancement you have given us. But if it comes to better protection against terrible diseases, I would have no qualms about using the genetic information of other species.

Erik: Thank you for your answers!

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The Island La Mirinda

A special learning experience

Translated by Helmut Lasarcyk
(E-book, First edition 2019 , about 9200 words)

Languages can be learned at any age. It is a special challenge if you try to do it without textbooks. You also do not need special courses. Think of small children. They do not use any written words and nevertheless acquire language in a playful manner. Well, this might not be so easy for older people. Maybe they have tried other successful methods in their lives. But it is worth trying. Come along with the protagonist on his journey to the island La Mirinda and join him in his learning experience. The consequences for his further life were unforeseeable.

Klaus Friese

in cooperation with Louis von Wunsch-Rolshoven and Jürgen Wulff

A Lesson About Esperanto

Translated by Helmut Lasarcyk
(Brochure, First edition 2015, about 2300 words)

Esperanto is a constructed language that is not usually taught at schools. The advantages and possibilities that Esperanto offers for international communication are therefore not known to most people. This gap can be closed by means of "A Lesson About Esperanto".