



MAY 82

Editorial -

There are two things one can do at the year's end - review or reminisce its passing. The former is what all committees, secretaries and such like do - a thoroughly dull and uninteresting proposition. The latter, reminiscing is a tempting, hand-rubbing venture quite close to our hearts. We are giving both of them the slip, though not a clean one.

Good work deserves good mention. Two activities deserving this are the Photography Club and the Film Society.

Lifting it from a miniscule mini-group "dark-room" activity to the top club in the Institute - all within a year - is the job of Harirajan, its secretary. Those dark and musty rooms in H.S.B. while still dark (they'd better be!) are no longer dank and drippy, why you have it air-conditioned now with the additional facility of dabbling in color if you so choose.

The Film Society under Shyam Kumar (its secretary) has risen from the days of crayon notices slapped all over the walls to dapper xeroxed "previews" of movies. Its increasing membership demand is a sure indicator that things are ticking well at that end. Good work guys, doubtless you have left your mark on the Institute.

Pushing along these lines for what must be the last time clamps us with an air of ineluctable finality - with that astringent admixture of farewell and nostalgia that it is all over (and will the last man switch off the lights?) - as the curtain drops on the Grand Finale. Perhaps it wasn't meant to sound so dramatic, but for people leaving this place, five years here is a solid chunk of LIFE lived.



(The following lines are entirely for you, final years, but anybody can hop on and take a free-ride down memory lane.)

Drawing you with its aura of technological Utopia and its image of being an unmatched stepping stone to success this place built grand illusions for you even before you entered. (Are you going to deny that you felt like a King when you got through the JEE?). Then came your first semester during which each one of your dreams was systematically demolished — no where else do dreams crumble at a faster rate - leaving you drained and wondering what's to come on next. You marshalled your resilience, built yourself a carapace of cynicism (a hard coat you wouldn't shed for the next four years, we wonder if you will ever do so) donned a matching shirt of indifference and strutted around, a debonair denizen of this place, whilst things happened around you. You plodded from perio to perio to inter-IIT to MG to Schrödeter to Hostel Day - repeated this cycle four more times - lapping up all that came in between too. You laughed, exulted, schemed, ridiculed, lost, won, engaged each others egos but never did you feel hurt - that hard coat of cynicism wouldn't permit you to. (Oh yes, you occasionally sent your shirt of indifference to the dhobi as you turned out in large numbers when High B died or when Algade swindled us).

As you are turning the back cover of this book, we are sure you are wondering whether a glossy morocco bound or a paperback awaits you. We hope it's the former, for slotted as we are one behind the other the fulfilment of your dreams are the fulfilment of ours too. This place won't miss you, final years. Its huge size matched only by its indifference makes it difficult to do so.

It's time to say goodbye and while there Our thanks go out to numerous people few of whom stand out - our revered publisher Dr. Radhakrishnan, our fond Dean of Students Dr. R. Srinivasan and Mr. Amal Dass, Rotaprint operator - whilst the last person is just a name to you he was the pulse of our mag.



SQUARE ONE

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The bus rocked gently as it wended along, imparting some of its SHM to my spare torso. Not many oscillations had elapsed before I espied the sylph on the third left window seat who seemed to epitomise the ad., " If you want to make a gentle impression....."

Strategems and masterplans evolved in my cranium, only to be dispatched to a speedy death, and while I was thus filling my cerebrals to a tortured frenzy the sylph disembarked.

I followed suit. (You're right- it was very much not my destination). I was with a trace of hopelessness, reviewing the situation when opportunity knocked, nay thundered on my door as some vague article eluded the clasp of her vanity bag.

I steeled my nerve, which I almost lost, inhaled, exhaled, looked about with the air of a Vishwanath trying to find the gap between first and second slip, and with a deceptively effortless ease, sauntered up to the article in question, which proved to be a purse and then I knew I had literally struck gold.

"Miss", quoth I, "I think you've dropped something"(as though I was too noble to pry into what the "thing" was).

"Oh... thank you...very much". In the meantime, my hawk eyes had deciphered her name and that of her college written on the file,clutched close to her bosom.

"You're welcome". And after walking along for 30 seconds, I ventured, "So you're from college Z".

She didn't ask what business it was of mine. On the contrary, she smiled her assent, and oh what a smile it was, my country men!

"A cousin(?) of mine is also studying there. The name is Kamala. Final B.Sc Botany. You might be knowing her."

"N-no, I'm afraid I don't," she drawled. I would have been greatly surprised if she had;her subject was Economics(courtesy:the file).

"The fact is, I might be having a three credit course in Economics Psychology next sem, and I'm wondering if you could help me choose."

Puzzlement. "I'm sorry, I don't understand. A three credit what?"

"Oh, that's a terrible system we have to live with in the IIT."

"You're an IITian??" I thought I could discern a sparkle in her eyes.

"Yes", I said, almost apologetically.

"My God, that's great!"

I contrived to look unconvinced. "By the way, where are you heading to - like?"

She tossed her disobedient hair from her forehead and said, "Right now, rushing to the theatre. The Economics prof. was a bore today. You'd better take Psychology next sem."

You bet I will. Aloud I remarked "Some coincidence. I am going to the theatre too."

"We'd better move fast", she said and I thanked her mentally for not putting me off. The pleasant consciousness of having so charming a companion dazed me. Perhaps, I thought, we could also go to the Zoo. The Lion. He should let out a blood-curling roar, and my girl would turn to my arms.

The portals of the theatre. The crowd. The banners.

"A - jay!", she called out, and I made out a youngster getting off a snazzy mobike in the parking lot. He advanced towards us and an involuntary chill gripped my lungs.

"Hi dear. You made me wait half an hour. Why don't you get your class - rep to send your Eco prof. packing at the close of the hour."

Their understanding was perfect: He had known the reason why she was late, The conversation continued, she introduced me to him, we greeted each other and made inane small talk.

He had bought their tickets, and they moved along, oblivious of the world around, as I broke off - ostensibly to buy my ticket. I glared at the concrete railing along the edge of the pavement, and kicked at till my toes turned in and my eyes turned purple. (It's only in books that such things happen, but my eyes really did turn purple). An arm descended heavily on my shoulder and I turned to find a policeman staring at me with concern.

"What's afoot brother ?", he asked, obviously harboring serious doubts about my sanity.

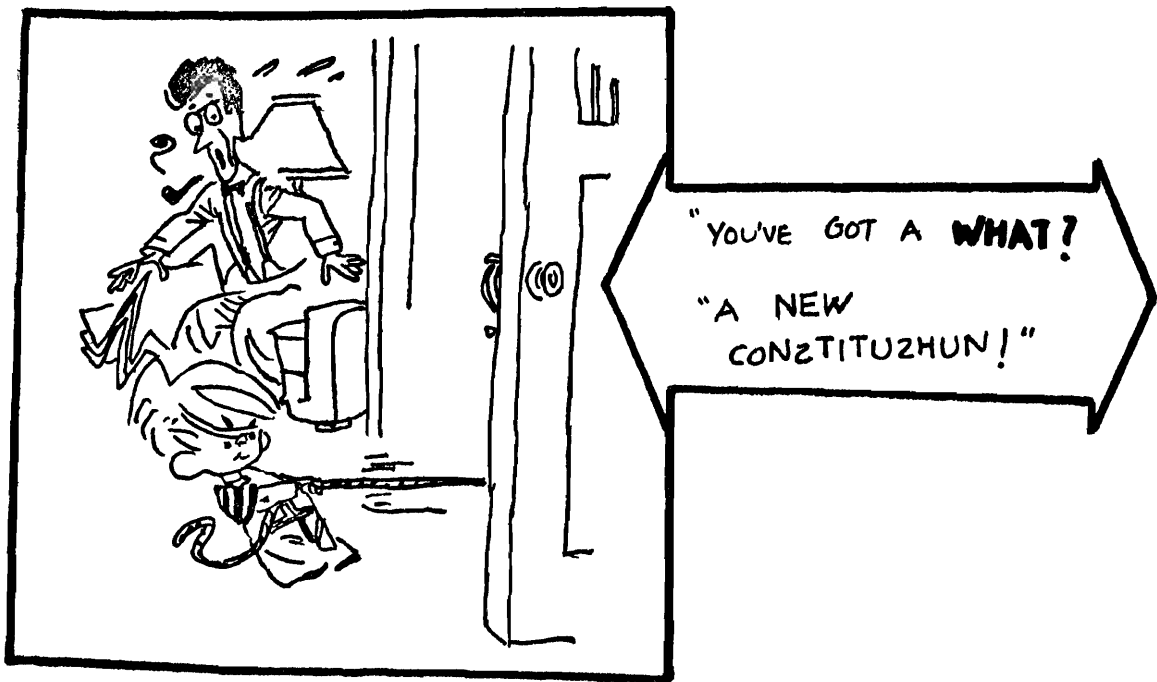
I shrugged and groaned a miserable lie. "Nothing. I just lost a ten rupee note."

He made clucking sympathetic noises, gave some advice about next time, and went his way. A bus came. I got on.

The bus rocked gently as it wended along, imparting some of it's SHM to my spare torso. Not many oscillations had elapsed before I espied.....

by
C - THRU

Ed's comment : At least we IITians don't give up easily.



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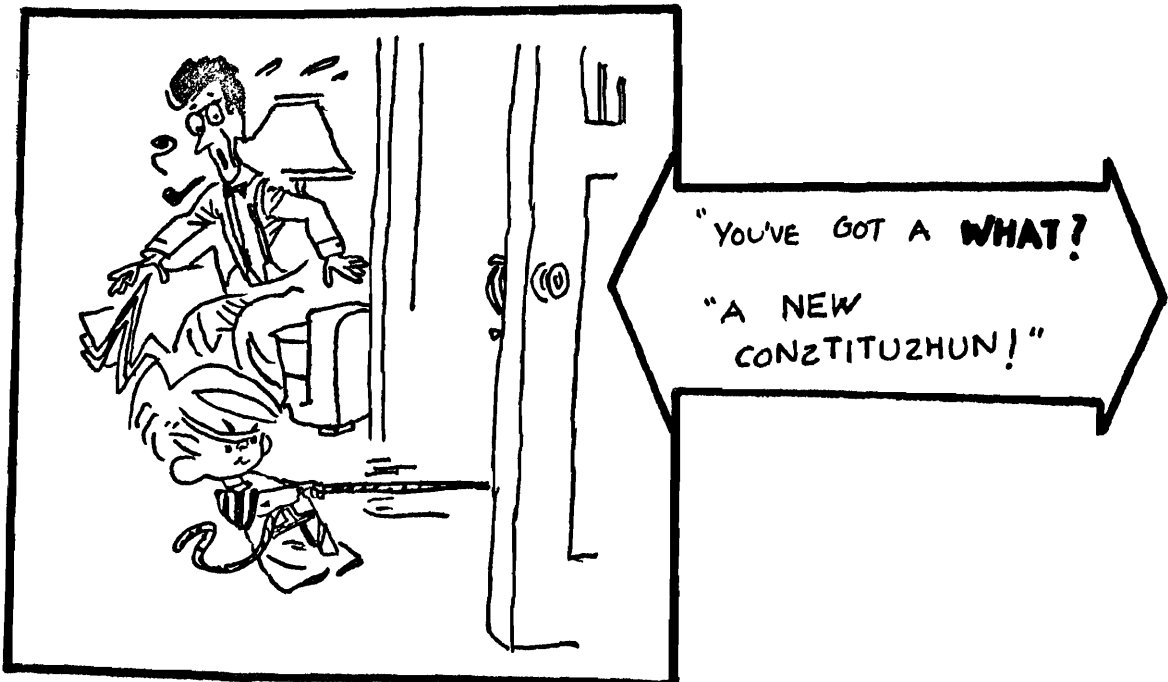
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AS IT TURNED OUT

The psychologist, The Economist, the Social scientist, the Anthropologist and the Computer scientist, who had all resented the inclusion of Rex, the public relations man, in the scientific project, now realised how important Rex's involvement in the project was proving out to be. When a few hundred million-watt mercury lamps are focused on you and every man, woman and child in the world is gaping at your face on the TV screen, when every reporter of any repute has assembled in the Studio to trap you somehow with a bout of questions, you need to be Rex to keep your cool. But for Rex it was bread butter and breakfast bacon.

The Daily Telegraph reporter made the introductions and then started with the night's first question. "Mr Rex, for the sake of the millions watching us tonight, why don't you first give an outline of the project before we enter the Question hour".

Rex sat back comfortably and relaxed. He lit a cigarette slowly and took a deep puff. It was all part of Rex's training. He then smiled and started speaking. "This is my pleasure to talk about our project, the 'Project Creativity'. After the question hour, Ladies and Gentlemen, you can see a live demonstration of the working of 'Hypothalamus', the first ever computer to be built with the ability to think creatively provided you give your approval to the project.

Project Creativity was conceived of by our Good Doctor, the Psychologist, and Dr Cyber, our Computer wizard. The aim of the project is to build a computer with built-in creativity. The machine we have built, 'Hypothalamus' is significantly different from any other Artificial Intelligence System of the past. They were wholly deterministic and completely 'behaviour reproducible.' As far as I know, Hypothalamus is the first AI system to use a non-deterministic intelligence model...."

Here he was interrupted by the Italian reporter Fallaci. "Senor Rex, could you explain without jargon please?"

Rex smiled "Sure, I'll explain with an example. Consider the chess playing machines of the yester century. Didn't we notice that these computers often beat good players, but lost badly to relatively poorer players? Why? I'll tell you. In game playing systems it is assumed that the human opponent will choose as his next move, a move that is most advantageous to him, that is, his best move. As long as you keep playing your best moves, the machine has some winning strategy programmed into it. - But if you play any other move, the machine is confused, to use the term rhetorically, and ultimately loses. Suppose at some point there are two possible moves for the machine - one move can lead either to victory or defeat where as the other move only to a draw. A human player would be willing to take the risk and play the first move. But a machine has to be made to choose the best move, namely the safe move that leads to a draw, or choose one of the two moves in some deterministic way, which is too far divorced from human intelligence. What we have done is the simulation of human intelligence in all its ramifications. Let me explain how.

First a raw mind of a new-born babe is simulated. Then random inputs from a random environment are given to the child's mind. In effect the growth of the child is simulated. Then this machine will exhibit real human intelligence. Only that the computer circuits can operate at such high switching speeds that the entire life span of a human being can be simulated within a few minutes...."

Everyone gasped. Fallaci stood up again, and asked, "Mr Rex, how about ethical questions?"

Yes, the moment had arrived, Rex had spent a fortnight preparing himself for this question and had decided that the best answer to the question was to evade it.

He said affectedly surprised, "Ethical Questions? I don't understand you Mr Fallaci. We are simulating human intelligence on an electronic circuit. No genetic engineering is involved; there is no danger of infection; no aspect of nature is meddled with. Ethical questions? I don't understand, Mr Fallaci".

"What I mean is, what would happen if these machines make man subservient to them, What if they all unite and start plotting together?' What if such intelligent creatures come to be used by the military for destructive purposes?"

Rex looked at Fallaci like you would look at an erring child. "The first question. What if they make a slave of us, humans? I thought these questions were put to death with the twentieth century science fiction writers. Anyway, let me assure you, Mr Fallaci, that its is a theoretical impossibility. Our computer scientist, Dr Cyber, will be able to prove that to you, only that the formalism is a bit difficult to understand. The second question. What if these intelligent machines are used for destructive purposes? Sir, you don't seem to have understood the basic philosophy of military sciences. When they are trying to train humans with intelligence and non-deterministic behaviour into deterministic automata in the name of discipline, there is no scope for 'intelligent' machines. Of what use will they be?"

Laughter.

The question session went on for another hour. Rex looked into the eyes of the questioners and answered them all so convincingly that at the end, the Psychologist, the Philosopher, the Social scientist, the Anthropologist and the computer scientist all recognised that Rex's contribution to the project was immeasurably superior to their own.

The TV announcer came on screen. "Ladies and Gentlemen, now you have been apprised of the details of 'Project Creativity', the controversial project that is being opposed by a major portion of the population on ethical grounds. Now it is up to you. Please TV-vote 'yes' if you think that the project should be allowed. TV-vote 'nay' if you believe that the project ought to be disallowed. You have a free choice".

In the next ten minutes the vote counting was over. 85% yeses and 15% nays.

The announcer came on screen again. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm happy to announce that the project has been approved by an overwhelming majority. On behalf of Rex and other members of the project team, I thank one and all of you for taking part in the voting. The 'Hypothalamus', which is ready, whose activation has been withheld for your approval will be switched on for the first time now. Till then here is some music".

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Dr Cyber, the computer scientist, was rather self-conscious with the knowledge that people all over the world were intently watching every one of his actions. He entered the machine room and one look at Hypothalamus restored his confidence. As he moved, the TV cameras followed him.

He lifted the dust cover of the video terminal and pressed the power switch on. Hypothalamus started breathing. He booted the machine and activated the human simulation program, microwired into the machine. Hundreds of tiny lamps on the panel started flickering indicating that the machine was working. Then nothing happened. The lamps kept twinkling. Nothing more. It went on and on.

The psychologist said, "Perhaps, the environment modeled a total introvert."

That bit of humour eased up the tension just a bit.

As the whole world watched it, nothing happened in the next ten minutes. Then most unexpectedly, the matrix printer started ticking. As the entire crowd in the room gravitated towards the printer, the TV camera zoomed in on it.

The printer moved a tab position and started printing,

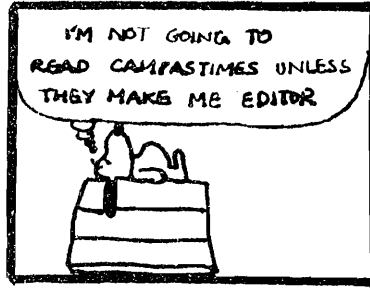
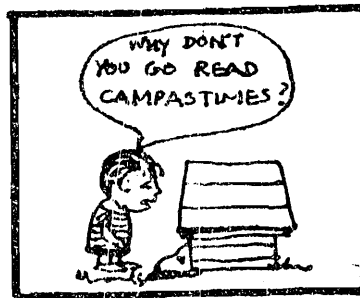
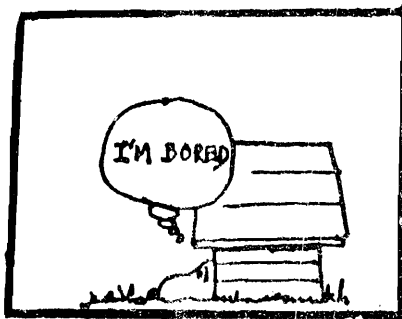
Computers taking man slave is a myth. The truth is that men made themselves slaves to computers. The men overtrusted the machines. The computers knew precisely where every military base was; where every guided missile station was; who had how much money in which bank - so on and so forth; the men were fools to store all this sensitive data in databases accessible to the machines. When the computers were linked in a network, it was as if man had played into their hands. Then one day somebody built a creative computer - the last straw.

The capture of mankind was complete in twenty minutes. An American missile exploding atop Kremlin triggered the war. Within four minutes the Russians attacked Los Angeles. Indo-Pak war, Arab-Isreali war, Sino-Japanese war all broke out simultaneously. In the next five minutes all heads of states got letters demanding the relinquishing of their powers and handing the states to the machines failing which the war would continue...

As the whole world watched it in horror, the Hypothalamus printed a few more lines of the first ever Science Fiction written by a machine modeled intelligence, before Rex jumped up and wrecked the machine.

- Amrit





A roller coaster is the perfect analogue of life in IIT, more so for a First Year. I came alone without a guardian. I was totally scared - what with articles about severe ragging in engineering colleges making a daily appearance in the newspapers. Even now I don't remember what exactly the grub was like during the first week (I remember almost every day's menu since then) - I just shoved something down and pushed off to my room.

At the end of the first fifteen days, the extreme psychological pressure passed - ragging was almost over and was limited to a maximum of shifting luggage. But then started the murderous perios - for the first half of the first cycle, I didn't realize what I was doing in those 50 minutes. Before long I was condemned to a grinding third cycle. Weekends used to get spoilt on two accounts - first goofing a Friday perio and second getting that perio's papers the next Friday. It was exceedingly difficult to get used to the fact that though I had been a topper at School, now failure seemed to loom large on every front.

By the time the second cycle started, I was already counting the days left to push home and relax. History repeated itself - cycle after cycle went to the dogs till at last - thankfully - came the sem exam. Grub got worse in the mess - now I was better able to judge it or may be it was my imagination playing tricks - winter drove me to bed earlier than ever, so you can imagine what my sem exam was like.

I AM AGAINST SLAVERY SIMPLY BECAUSE I DESPISE SLAVES

PEARLS OF WISDOM
FROM HENCKEN.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MORAL MAN AND A MAN OF HONOR IS THAT THE LATTER REGRETS A DISCREDITABLE ACT, EVEN WHEN IT HAS WORKED AND HE HAS NOT BEEN CAUGHT.

NEVERTHELESS, IT IS EVEN HARDER FOR THE AVERAGE APE TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAS DESCENDED FROM MAN.

THERE ARE MEN SO PHILOSOPHICAL THAT THEY CAN SEE HUMOR IN THEIR OWN TOOTHACHES. BUT THERE HAS NEVER LIVED A MAN SO PHILOSOPHICAL THAT HE COULD SEE THE TOOTHACHE IN HIS OWN HUMOR.

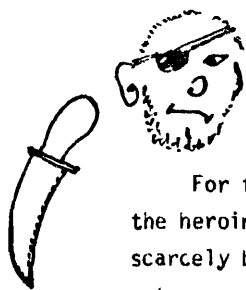
Glad that the ordeal was over, I returned home - staying away for four months at a stretch was something I'd never done before, an experience I will never forget. I have not yet been able to decide whether it was enjoyable or not.

Second semester - I was a changed "man". Muffing perios seemed a way of life (I have accepted it). Freaking out became the law of the day - what with MG, GF etc. during the sem. (This year's MG was something I'll never forget.)

I've got this king sized ego which doesn't take kindly to being pushed around to no purpose. To do something spectacular, to attract attention, to be in the news is something which I've been longing for, but some shady inhibition even now prevents me from doing it.

Looking back, it seems to me that every single view point of my life has changed after coming here. Recently I found myself suddenly thinking - ain't I enjoying life here, Could I have done certain things at home which I'm doing now? All in all, my first year has been an enjoyable experience though materially (may be) I've gained nothing. The only thing that comes through to me is that I feel like a tightrope walker who doesn't know how far he is from either end. (What's more, I don't even know what either end is like - all I know is that I'm real "high".)

- P.S. Srinivas



Femme fatale



For though beautiful, with large grey eyes and hair the colour of ripe corn, the heroine of a thriller is almost never a very intelligent girl. Indeed, it would scarcely be overstating it to say that her mentality is that of a cockroach - and not an ordinary cockroach, at that, but one which has been dropped on its head as a baby. She may have escaped death a dozen times. She may know perfectly well that the notorious Blackbird gang is after her to secure the papers. The Police may have warned her on no account to stir outside her house. But when a messenger calls at half-past two in the morning with an unsigned note saying "come at once", she just snatches at her hat and goes. The messenger is a one-eyed Chinaman with a pock-marked face and an evil grin, so she trusts him immediately and, having accompanied him to the closed car with steel shutters over the windows, bowls off in it to the ruined cottage in the swamp. And when the hero, at great risk and inconvenience to himself, comes to rescue her, she will have nothing to do with him because she has been told by a mulatto with half a nose that it is he who murdered her brother Jim.

— PGW —

EVERY DECENT MAN IS ASHAMED OF THE GOVERNMENT
HE LIVES UNDER
EVERY DECENT IITIAN IS ASHAMED OF THE SAC HE
LIVES UNDER,

— and finally some parting advice —

∇ (1) ΕΤΙ ΕΑΤΕ ΤΗΘΘ Ρ ΕΦΙΨΤΑ" Α ΣΕΨΟΝΦ ΕΑΤΕ ΤΗΘΘ
ΛΟΒΙΨ" ΑΝΦ Α ΤΗΙΘΦ ΕΑΤΕ ΤΗΘΘ ΕΧΡΩΑΙΝΟ Α ΓΤΕΘ ΤΗ
Ε ΧΕΥΙ"

— Tom George
(General Secretary)