

Chapter 17

Evolutionary Ethics

The biology buildings were reached through the Pruitte Botanical Gardens. This is a succession of greenhouses holding, each in its turn, South American, Asian and African jungles, courtesy of this or that foundation. Some of the plants luxuriating in them are very valuable. Walking past them each day on the way to my lab it became a recurring fantasy of mine that I might be able to train my lab animals to break into them at night and steal a few rare specimens so I could retire for life.

These notions never graduated beyond the stage of make-believe, yet I must have indulged this daydream almost daily over the course of half a decade. One might imagine that a thousand-fold repeated dream would have ultimately some impact on human history, but I suspect that mine never did; not for lack of resolve, but because I'd concluded that my monkeys were above such conduct.

Once past the Pruitte Gardens one is at a loss to identify any landmark that relates the appearance or grounds of the Biology building to the Life Principle. Dull dirty asphalt and concrete cincture the premises. It is all but impossible to breathe within the thick atmosphere of pollution pouring from a garbage reprocessing plant and nearby plastics factory. The building itself had been cobbled together over a century ago from the concatenation of moist and crumbling limestone blocks. Over the century they've waxed progressively moister and flakier. Moss crawls out of every crack and joint from the foundation to the tacky

shingles and tar on the roof, like some creature in anguish fleeing the scalpels, microtomes, spectrographs, hypotheses and erudition of the learned fiends running scot-free within.

In my day it was called the Agassiz Building. Owing to a flap over Louis Agassiz's racialist views, it was renamed the Pliny Building in the late 60's . Greeting me every day as I walked into the lobby was a grotesque statue of Linnaeus. The lighting was antiquated everywhere outside the labs, the lobbies, halls and corridors steeped in gloom, while a dense odor of formaldehyde dominated conversations, thoughts and reflection. By themselves the long corridors were depressing; but their contents made them even creepier. Tall glass cases, the final residences of hominid skeletons, rimmed the balustrade of the helical staircase descending to the basement. Stacked against the walls of the basement were glass-fronted packing cases adorned with anomalous organs gleaned from every corner of the animal kingdom: horse brains, skull fragments from vanished races, stomachs of sea monsters and giant reptiles, weird crustacean eyes, antediluvian eggs. At the end of one corridor one found a pickled female rabbit, cut open so as to expose the foetuses of its unborn children. In the middle of another stood a glass case in the shape of a vertical column holding the toes, thumbs and pecker of some nameless Scandinavian. Directly before the door of my lab and adjacent on both sides of the door, some savant of bygone days had piled up cases housing the cadavres of still-born human monsters. Some of them resembled people I knew and I gave them nick-names.

The cramped workspace that, with the greatest reluctance, had been allotted to me further intensified the lethal atmosphere peculiar to this citadel of the Life Sciences. I was grateful for what I had: it had taken me 2 years to be allowed even to apply for space. Given the well-nigh universal belief that my research was tripe, I'm sure the chairman of the department (who never dealt with me directly and, when we did bump into each other in the corridor, appeared to be wondering what I was still doing around there) thought he was doing me a favor by shoving me into this tiny cubicle, by which is literally meant a rectangular parallelepiped the height and width of a *Le Corbusier* Modular: 8 by 12 feet of floor space and a height barely sufficient to raise an arm above my head.

There were no windows. Those patches of wall which weren't painted a dirty green were dirty yellow. I began repainting the room about a month after occupying it, but the fumes, after killing more than half of my lab animals, almost killed me as well, and the project was abandoned. Even the plaster evidenced a certain antipathy at being obliged to live in such a dismal space. Two of my animals were killed when 10-pound chunks of plaster torn loose from the ceiling and fell on their heads. A crack ran like an arthritic finger along the outer wall. Through it, day and night seeped tissues, organs and chemicals both organic and inorganic. With the hosts of experiments from the lunatic to the brilliant in progress around the clock in all the cells and chambers of Agassiz Hall, one can exercise one's imagination in visualizing the sorts of things I might find spilling into the cages, floor and tables of my lab.

Yet it was mine - all mine - and I grew to love it. I had my books, my reprints, typewriter, caged animals and measuring instruments (several of my own invention) all together in the same location. The animal cages, piled one on top of another, filled up more than half the room from the back wall. The remaining space was taken up by a worktable, a sink in the corner and a tiny bookcase. Sitting alone there for long hours, engrossed in my work, undisturbed by visits or unwelcome sounds other than the clatter of my typewriter, the clanking of the pipes, the gibbering of my animal co-workers, and my relentless talking to myself, time and space faded away and dissolved and I forgot my surroundings and (in the Pascalian sense) my own greatness and misery.

There were some days when depression got the better of me. Then I might close up shop and climb the 4 flights of stairs to Harold Malakoff's lab, just to see what he was up to. In contrast to my hermit's cell, he was a beneficiary of a vast and generous endowment: a room whose usable floor space measured 40 x30 feet, with light pouring in from half a dozen windows, state of the art lab facilities, several nubile lab assistants and half a dozen grad students to do the grunt work for the final reports to which he signed his own name. He wasn't in the least afraid of hard work himself but he loved taking all the credit. "What are grad students for? ", he joked. Though myself a grad student I'd been out in the real world and couldn't have agreed with him more.

I was always welcome. Harry needed somebody to look down on. Not that his friendship wasn't sincere; we both valued the opportunity to communicate with someone. It didn't disconcert me

that he sneered at what I presumed to call my "biology". He felt in fact that some of my ideas might be credible if I only called them "philosophy", the generic label for everything scientists hold in contempt ever since the inauguration of the "Age of Reason" in the 18th century. In some ways Jenner's invention of vaccination, while it has saved countless thousands of lives, also marked the beginning of the end for thought. Who needed it anymore?

Harry's condescension also masked a certain amount of envy, common among scientists who find they need mathematics for their work but aren't terribly good at it. Most of the time Harry and I didn't bother with shop talk. We were content to talk about everything else, the news, the state of the world, books we'd been reading, academic politics at Zelosophic, gossip about colleagues in the biology department, soggy Philadelphia anecdotes, personal problems, things of that sort.

Malakoff was buried knee deep in cutting edge research with plant lice. The fantastic spread the university had given him was built on a mighty foundation of 30 grants from the Department of Agriculture, agribusiness corporations, agronomy institutes and agricultural colleges. Two grants were from the National Science Foundation, 4 from the Rockefeller Foundation. He knew how to play both ends against the middle: the Rockefeller supported his work because it might possibly lead to ways of eradicating plant lice as pests, while the National Science Foundation supported him because he knew ways to make them thrive for the needs of basic scientific research. Harry himself was only interested in their biochemistry; he couldn't have cared less about alleviating the

miseries of mankind's starving millions. There was something almost physical about the way Harry reeked of ambition. In most people I would have been repulsed, but coming from him it added to his charm.

Once in a long while I sought out his advice on purely scientific matters. Perusing my old notebooks I realize that on April 15, 1961, something in my research related to plant ecology inspired me to stop by Malakoff's lab. As I swung open the main door to his lab Harry looked up from peering into his microscope and waved to me. Laughing he got up off his stool:

"Hey there, Aleph! If it isn't the last of the Huxleys! "

We pulled up chairs and sat around gazing at the ceiling like a pair of astronomers who share the secret knowledge that beyond it lies a sky filled with myriads of stars.

" So, Aleph. What's new?"

I knit my eyebrows: " Why, Harry, what a question! The whole world! The whole universe is born anew every second!"

" You mean every second by second." he chuckled, " the whole caboodle is accelerating." I gave him a brief outline of the questions I thought he could answer. His face puckered up in a wry something between a smile and a frown:

"Ecology! " Malakoff threw up his hands in mock despair .
"Ecology, Aleph ! I can show you ecology all right!" As he stood up he made a sweeping gesture in the south-westerly direction of the room where his lice - infested crops were being grown. Every year, on a scheduled crop rotation his team planted a dozen plots with rutabaga, tomatoes and tobacco. One of his favorite jokes was that

even if his grants didn't materialize for that year, they would always have enough to eat. He led me to the tobacco plants:

"*Ecology!*" he continued, as if hypnotized by the very word, "Ecology: it's just a word. But behind that word lie - *infinities* !! Aleph, just take a look at this!" Walking in the train of Harry's impulsive gait I followed him back to his worktable where a dozen microscopes were aligned in a row. He motioned me into a chair and pushed one of the microscopes in front of me.

"Ecology in action!" A small patch in a culture dish filled with agar-agar had been magnified a thousand times. What I saw left me aghast. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of micro-organisms, vicious creatures all of them, were devouring each other in unabating rapacity. From my point of view, this bloody debauch - or whatever it is that substitutes for blood in such beings - was utterly irresponsible and senseless. No, worse, it was mindless! Where was the universal principle of mentation that Descartes ascribes to all sentient beings? So caught up were they with the immediacy of their need that one could not imagine them having any spare time in which to investigate the intrinsic premises on which this way of life was based.

I was fascinated: I must have stared a full ten minutes at this wanton autopopagic orgy. I blushed from the embarrassment of my ignorance. Totally perplexed I looked up to meet Malakoff's benign know-it-all stare:

"What's it all mean? Is that all there is to it?"

"More or less, Aleph." He removed his thick glasses and rubbed his eyes, "It puts me in mind a Tingley sculpture

programmed for autodestruction, with a Tingley himself hanging around to make another one. No rime or reason, no sense to it at all. At most a - how shall I put it? - A sort of aesthetic aura, a harsh and unnatural beauty one associates with the wastes of Antarctica or the lunar landscape .. beauty which, we can safely assume, the microorganisms themselves are in no position to appreciate."

Harry stood up again and motioned for me to follow him back to his tobacco plants. As he parted them with his deft fingers he cried :"*Love me, love my lice!* "

And, indeed, looking at the plants' innards I saw how they were being ruthlessly wasted by hoards of greedy parasites.

"It's tragic ...", he paused, as if that weren't quite the right word - "I guess. Yet since it's always the same, it becomes meaningless. The lice eat the plant, the plant dies. Luckily the plant has managed to reproduce itself before it dies. So, good, we have a new plant: so what? Then the lice die. Of course the lice also reproduce.

" The new lice eat the new plant, and it also dies. Etcetera, etcetera, so forth and so on, forever and ever. *And it doesn't mean a damn thing* !" Harry had to pause to catch his breath:

" Please, God, tell me that it means something! Aleph, can you find any meaning in this endless carnage? I wish it meant something: but it doesn't!!"

His view was typical for the majority of people working in the Biology Department. If you let drop the slightest hint that you might believe that your research meant something, you were jumped on by everyone as a vitalist. Investigators who treated

their guinea pigs too gently for ran the risk of being ostracized for believing that lab animals had souls. To give him his due, Malakoff was much more open-minded than his colleagues in this regard. Whenever I announced that I was looking for a direction to evolution he merely told me my ideas were nonsense and let it go at that.

At the other end of the spectrum lay people like Clorinda Wales.

She was the desiccated, tenured old spinster in rapid process of deliquescence who devoted the better part of her days to dissecting frogs in a horror chamber on the 5th floor. Had she ever overheard some of the ideas I confessed to Harry she would have convened a Star Chamber to purge me off the campus!

It was also my sorry fate to have to share my basement corridor with a madman. His narrow laboratory stretched a good 40 feet from the door of the basement practically to my room. I forget his real name, no doubt for reasons of psychic survival, but the Biology faculty had given the nickname of "Dr. Mabuse". Mabuse was a man in his middle 40's. He spoke English with a thick Central European accent, actually an odd Czech dialect spoken by a small number of people in some inaccessible Bohemian province. I say this because nobody, not even Czechs could figure out where he'd come from. His posture was wretched; indeed he was virtually a hunchback. His nervous tics could become very pronounced when he was upset or angry, that is to say almost all the time. In his face was a mixture of intelligence, craftiness and brutishness - altogether an ugly combination. He was undeviating in his

determination that nobody should like him. Frequent seminars, open to the public but usually attended only by biologists, were held a large auditorium on the second floor of Agassiz. Mabuse always sat in the front row, doing what he could to discountenance the guest speaker with threatening gestures and hideous faces. At the same time he welcomed the fact that he was universally feared and detested because that left him alone to do as he pleased in his laboratory.

He hated Jews and most other nationalities (in that order). He was always insinuating that the men around him were all homosexuals and the women all possessive monsters who would rape him if they could. He never let pass an occasion to let us know that he held all the research being done in the department other than his own beneath contempt.

Mabuse claimed to be investigating heroin addiction in dogs, a professed goal that brought in lots of money in grants. No dog survived his tender mercies more than 3 weeks. In his experiments he kept feeding a dog massive doses of heroin until he vomited it up. The heroin was extracted by refining the vomit through a filtration system, then fed to another dog. The heroin could be passed through the stomachs of 10 or more dogs. Mabuse claimed that he was studying the changes in the chemical structure of the heroin molecule as it passed from vomit to vomit. Apart from some vague mumbling about human welfare, Mabuse never bothered to give a serious justification for this work. If pressed on the matter he would have said that it was meaningless. Anything else would have gotten him labeled as a vitalist.

Conforming to the trend in the department I avoided him as much as possible. If inadvertently I bumped into him on the way to my lab I recoiled as if a piece of dog shit had been dropped on me. Mabuse for his part sniveled in such a manner as to indicate that some disgusting odor had gotten loose in the basement (worse than the ones normally permeating the building) the exact origins of which he was unable to discern.

Being as absent-minded as any other scientist it took a number of unpleasant encounters before I conditioned myself to never walk by his lab. The turning-point came in the winter of 1961. As I shuffled past the 4 translucent glass-fronted door windows of his lab a series of long drawn-out howls of wretched, dying dogs froze me in my tracks. Tension had been building up between us for years and the inevitable threshold at which I would lose control had been broken. I ripped open the door of his lab and yelled : "*Mabuse, you madman! Desist! Desist at once!* "

Dressed in a lab smock caked with blood and dog guts Mabuse was sitting hunched over a ledger with his back to me. He was virtually deaf though I'd shouted loudly enough to get through to him. The osteoporosis that would kill him by the end of the decade made him unable to turn around quickly, but eventually he did. For what seemed quite a long time but was probably only a few minutes, he stared at my face, No doubt he needed to convince himself of the reality of my existence. With his long left index finger he scratched off a few calloused flakes of tough dry skin

forming a thin cover over his sunken cheeks . Then - if the word makes any sense) - he smiled:

" So, Kenter? Aleph Kenter! You gotta Yiddish name, huh! Is you duh Yiddle mit der fiddle? Whut's it to you, den? You give me the paychecks, I do something else. You tink I like sitting all day long mit stinking bodies of dogs? So, you get out!! "

The atmosphere was permeated by the stench of shit and vomit. Nausea prevented me from doing more than stare, speechless with fascination, at his experimental setup. Six dogs, each of a different species, were secured by metal bands around their torsos and strapped along the wall facing the corridor. Lengths of plastic tubing extended from the stomach of each dog to the one adjacent to it; the two dogs at the far ends were likewise connected by a long tube running along the floor. At the midpoint of each tube a whining pump functioned as a filtration mechanism for the flow of visceral refuse.

No longer was Dr. Mabuse obliged to spend the better part of his days up to his eyeballs in dog vomit! The huge quantities of heroin fed to the first dog in the chain automatically passed through the filtration pumps and into the stomach of the second one, and so on, through the sequence of six dogs then back to the first. Meters of various sorts peppered the apparatus, from which he could read off his data sitting down in chairs arranged at convenient locations.

Mabuse grabbed a steak knife and waved it in my direction: *"Git out, Kenter! Git out you dirty Yid! Git out from my lab! "* he hissed, but I didn't need to be told twice. I slammed the door shut

and reeled down the corridor to the sink at the far end. I must have vomited for half an hour. Then I locked the door of my lab and didn't come out again until well after midnight. After that I never forgot to take the roundabout route that avoided having to pass by his lab. When the story made the rounds of my colleagues, they just laughed at me. One of them suggested that I take up a collection for the "Be kind to dogs" fund.

Thus history repeated itself and I found myself all alone, even in the provincial little world of Zelosophic's biology department. Nobody ever came by to inquire into my research or give me either encouragement or criticism. I was labeled an ontogenist, scorned as a vitalist, nobody had a good opinion of me. None of them came close to understanding what I'd meant by describing my field as Evolutionary Ethics, my profession as "evolutionary ethicist". Nor did anyone express any interest in acquiring such understanding. It was a shame, really. One good conversation would have convinced most of them that my methods and goals were credible, and every bit as scientific as theirs.

Evolutionary Ethics - the phrase comes from an essay by Julian Huxley in honor of his grandfather. At that time it was (and still is) considered something of a bastard science, and neither Biology nor Philosophy of Science were prepared to acknowledge its existence. The founder of Evolutionary Ethics, the very reverend Anglican Bishop Sylvester Higginsplop got the idea from reading the Social Darwinists, without having the least idea of what they were saying. Higginsplop and I corresponded briefly before his death in 1961. It is a sad commentary on the speciousness of

Zelosophic's claim to intellectual greatness that in the 5 years of laboring in the basement of Agassiz I didn't acquire a single co-worker or graduate student collaborator.

Even the most sophisticated versions of its philosophy and methodology can be derived from the fundamental postulate:

" The Survival of the Fittest is NOT a Tautology ! "

That's the crux of the matter. Working all alone in a tiny basement room, year after year, I found myself talking to anything that breathed. Although most of my research was done with monkeys I used many different kinds of animals, even sea urchins and nematodes. My favorite auditors were rabbits; it may have been because I was fond of their big ears:

" If Darwin is a tautology" I would say to them, " then *you* are a tautology!" The occasional squeal of indignation gave me the sense that I was being understood.

Speaking in the manner of a popularizer - yet not inaccurately - *Evolutionary Ethics* can be understood as a sort of crossbreed between Teilhard de Chardin and Jack London. Everything Teilhard de Chardin ever wrote, both the readable and the indigestible parts, including the writings damned by the Catholic church and, I warrant, even the pages burned in his Bunsen lamps, is one long cry of defiant affirmation: *Evolution is going somewhere* !

In his work as a paleontologist Teilhard had come across far too many bones in this gigantic landfill of a planet to continue to believe they had no reason for being there. Indeed Teilhard became so desperate for meaningful bones that he buried some of

them himself. ¹ In his mind's eye Teilhard lined up all the bones he'd studied, from the battlefields of North Africa to the sands of the Gobi Desert, and mused: *Where the hell are they all going?*

For a deeply religious mind the answer was ready-made with the question: *they're going to God!* Had Plato read Darwin he might have composed a dialogue claiming to prove that they were evolving to the idea of the perfect bone. Teilhard, obviously, believed they were evolving to the perfect Christian bone, every one of them, even the famous tooth of the Buddha in Sri Lanka.

Teilhard's next innovation, and his most brilliant, was to interpolate from the biosphere into the noösphere (his own coinage), the realm of the psyche; there are plenty of old bones there, too. The Chardinist noösphere is something in the nature of a universal Starship Enterprise, a space vessel carrying life to the Ω -point. One doesn't have to agree with his identification of the Ω -point with the Second Coming - William Butler Yeats certainly wouldn't have - to be impressed by the larger features of his teleology.

Jack London's take on Evolution lies at the opposite noöspheric pole: The catch-phrase "*Raw in tooth and claw*" encapsulates the alpha and the omega of his primary hypothesis. London maintained that the human race had made no progress whatsoever in its hegeira out of the caves. Trapped beneath the oppressive *Folies Bergères* of civilization lies an unrepentant Oedipus Complex, with Mankind as the Father and Nature as the

¹ Chardin's other claim to fame is as a co-conspirator in the Piltdown Man hoax.

Mother. The murder of the former is called Civilization, the rape of the latter masquerades as Science, and we end up no better than we were before.

London effectively sets forth his thesis in a startling memorandum, the abstract of which can be found in *Masterplots*²: *The Call of the Wild*. Cast into the form of a novel, it sets out to prove that what we call a dog is nothing more than a hypocritical wolf. In the heart of every dog, buried under tons of false notions of civilization one invariably uncovers the ancient lust for the pack. Yet - and herein lies the true paradox - there are many more dogs around today than there are wolves. Thus it would appear that London, no more than deChardin, has not been successful in indicating the direction of Evolution's Arrow for mankind .

From reading the works of these other thinkers including Charles Darwin, Louis Agassiz, Herbert Spencer, H.G. Wells, all the Huxleys, Henri Bergson, D'Arcy Thompson, H.H. Godard, W.H. Hudson, Havelock Ellis, Nietzsche, Ernst Haeckel, Freud, Jung, Bernard Shaw, Zola, Kropotkin, Adolf Hitler and just about everyone else who's devised his own mish-mash of pseudo-evolutionary ideology, I reached the conclusion that this was a domain of thought rife with confusion, for which a return to strict scientific method was long overdue.

²Volume II, SALEM PRESS, 1996, pg. 903

A scientific approach must be based on mathematics. There have been many fiascos in this field, starting with Rashevsky's ambitious "Mathematical Biophysics". By the early 60's , with the discovery of the DNA double helix, the working out of the mechanisms of genetics, together with the rich loam of primary data, both geological and contemporary, I felt that sufficient resources now existed to start making a cautious extrapolation of evolution's direction in the immediate future.

Mathematicians call such a direction a *gradient* . The motion along the gradient through universal time is called a *world line* . By the application of numerous philosophical, religious, statistical and other criteria I set out to look for indicators (biospheric or noöspheric) relevant to the direction of evolution for a period of, say, about 5 million years. If one imagines a day as beginning with the Cambrian age this works out to about 25 minutes of biological history.

It was my belief that from these flux curves I could extract a single arrow giving both the direction, and the intensity, of Evolution at the present time. This arrow points away from certain creatures and towards others. It sticks in the craw of the living kingdom like the accusing finger of the Cosmic Prosecutor. The coelacanth may survive another billion years; the human race may perish tomorrow. Even a partial success in extracting this arrow from the raw data exposes the naked favoritism of Nature, and may tell us which species are doomed and which will be allowed survive. All ethical Darwinians must heed its stern decrees.

I believed that this idea , so staggering in its implications yet so simple in its statement, had been enunciated by many others over the course of a century. After all, what I was proposing was no more remarkable than what meteorologists do when they forecast the weather. They, too, sift through the available data, estimates the size and relative importance of trends, decide what's relevant and what isn't, calculate their gradients and makes their predictions. Yet hours of library research failed to uncover the name of someone else who'd looked at the problem in exactly this way.

The possibility of being able to construct such an arrow directly out of the raw data lying about loose and unclassified in Nature's repositories came to me, like so many of the great ideas that have shaped Man's destiny, in a blinding flash of insight while engaged in some tedious activity. It was on September 19th, 1962, graduate student's registration day at Zelosophic U. I was standing with a few thousand others in a long line that wrapped around the newly constructed admissions center, Bantam Hall. After zig-zagging across campus, it went in one door of the Student Union and out another and spilled over into the traffic on Hemlock Street.³ The line snaked through the campus for the better part of the day, much in the manner of a boa constrictor being pushed through a cold-cuts slicer, all to the end that our registration papers be given 3 pretentious stamps. A green sheet

³It is traditional to give the names of trees to Philadelphia's streets . This name had no doubt by suggested by its philosophical catchet.

was then torn out and handed back to us and we were sent on our way.

The day was muggy and hot - rare though not unknown for a Philadelphia September. It was unpleasant and debilitating to be standing in line for such a long time, and there were times when I felt as if I were a camel with a half-ton load on his back, moving in a long caravan across the Sahara towards Port Sudan.

Not unlike - it struck me - not at all unlike Life's toilsome trudge up the slopes of Evolution! And in that distant time, when all creatures great and small shall reach their distant goal, when, at the end of eon upon eon the tiniest microbe shall have passed to the Omega Point, might not the God who awaits us be some old bureaucrat with 3 day's growth of beard and dreaming of His pension, crushing an inked rubber stamp on our bodies, to indelibly impress the single word "Processed" into our flagellated flesh?

Very likely, very likely . Nor should one overlook the major differences between these processions: the line moving to Bantam Hall was directed, and we were aware of that direction. Whatever miseries we put up with in our long ordeal came from decisions knowingly, if not altogether willingly, made. By knowing its direction we could delude ourselves with the notion that we had the freedom to step out of it. I observed about 3 students who did just that. Had they decided to find a job, or go into the army, (Vietnam was then only a pale cloud on the horizon), rather than face another year in grad school? Would they begin a search for another school that would be kinder to their feet?

Such speculations helped me forget my surroundings. I considered the possibility that there was a person at the head of the line, a born leader of men, a visionary or prophet, someone who had made it his business to show up on graduate registration day to preach the futility of entering Bantam Hall to turn in and receive back papers entitling them to another one, three or even ten years of stultification at Zelosophic. Given the proper requisites of force of personality, charisma, energy and determination, such a person might, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, lead the entire graduate enrollment of Zelosophic of the campus to a nearby restaurant for pizza and milkshakes. Were this to happen (and it was not impossible only extremely improbable) the history of Zelosophic U., of Philadelphia, of the United States, possibly the world itself, would be altered. At the very least we would obtain some relief from the heat.

Taking my cue from Teilhard, I extrapolated from the Phenomenon of Graduate Registration to the Evolution of all Living Creation. Although we fancy we have some notion of why we're remaining in the line and where it's going, most animals are far more honest and would readily admit that they haven't a clue! For any wretched creature embroiled in its tentacles, Evolution has never meant anything but unremitting, disgusting, idiotic and totally pointless pain. The very earthworms would opt out if they saw some way of doing so!

It was in these terms that I pictured the fundamental dilemma of humanity. It is ignorance alone which keeps us permanently on the rack. Uncover the gradients of evolution then see if we can alter

their direction. That's where the evolutionary ethicist has a role to play.

Someone taped me on the shoulder. I looked up to confront the hostile face of a campus security guard.

"What's up, bud? What're you doin' hangin' out here?"

I raised my head and looked around. It was late evening. In less than an hour it would be nightfall. The realization came to me with something of a shock that I'd been left all alone leaning against the iron railing going up the steps of the Student Union. It was over an hour since the line had moved through the Student Union and left me to my fate.

It was a frightening confirmation of my cogitations on the grim finality of Evolution's dictums: *I had missed Registration Day* ! I had missed out on registering for graduate school in the very act of discovering a reason for re-enrollment in graduate school! I raced up the steps of the Student Union, through the front door and out the back, then climbed the slopes of the campus towards the Admissions Center.

Bantam Hall was the ugliest and most recent addition to campus architecture; since then several rivals have been erected. It had been designed to house all the new data-processing technology for the inflated bureaucracy that Zelosophic U. expected to take on board when it became the Megaversity of its dreams. Bantam is a 6-story building shaped like a robot's head. One could presume that the rest of its body lies buried under ground. Large sheets of plate glass loom vertically from its foundations, inset in sleek cobalt blue blocks of finished concrete

reflecting the vinyl plastic ideology much in favor at the time it was built.

All out of breath and limping I approached the building. Every floor except the 4th where the clean-up crews were working, was dark. I ran smack up against the glass and metal doors and banged my fists against them with all my strength. In due time a janitor, with the loping gait of someone who refuses to be hurried, came into view. He opened the door a crack and beamed his flashlight straight into my eyes.

"Whad'd'ya want?"

"Let me in!" I cried, *"I want to register for graduate science!"*

"Too late!"

"Isn't there anyone I can talk too? All I need are 3 stamps on this!" I extended my registration forms.

"Go home, d'y'ah hear! Come back next year!"

"But this is silly. Why can't I register now? Can I come back tomorrow? Next week? Next month...."

The janitor lowered his flashlight. As my eyes regained their focus I saw that he was grinning at me. Furthermore the teeth that filled most of that grin appeared unusually large. No doubt my senses were playing tricks on me. Perhaps these were only effects of the lighting.

He leaned forward out of the shadows and the rest of his head emerged. His ears also seemed a trifle too large. He had big hands as well which to my mind had something of the shape and

appearance of paws. Then it struck me forcibly that his forehead was abnormally pronounced and that his lower jaw jutted forward.

There could be no mistake.

I was looking at a Neanderthal Man.

