

## Chapter 19

### Recapitulation

For the next year I was the darling of Zelosophic U. My comeback promised to be as sensational, if not more so, than my arrival 17 years earlier. The event was celebrated at every level of the class structure of the Academy. Persons who had been in the full vigor of youth at the onset of my university career, domestics and janitors for example, buildings and grounds personnel or security guards, drew forth from the storehouses of ancient memory all the Aleph Cantor legends, greatly distorted though undiminished with time, of the '40's .

It was rumored about that Albert Einstein had paid my train fare to Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, treated me to lunch then consulted me on some mathematical difficulties he was having with his Unified Field Theory; that I'd demonstrated that the moon was going to fly apart in 3 years; that when my predictions didn't pan out I ended up in the nuthouse.

The Felicia Salvador -Frank Kriegle escapade , reworked through a metaphysic of folklore worthy of Vico and Herder, emerged in a form that would have been unrecognizable to its protagonists. Popular tradition now maintained that I'd challenged my rival in love, Frank Kriegle, a brilliant logician 15 years older than I was, to a mathematics duel. He'd been so deeply humiliated by my devastating victory that he'd left mathematics altogether and given up the girl. What happened to her was never explained.

Certain stories were so fabulous that one could only imagine them invented under the influence of LSD. It was in this way that I learned for the first time that I'd been around the world 3 times; that I'd set up the mathematics program for Indonesia's university system; that I'd burned all the research I'd done since the age of 14 as a protest against the Arms Race; that the doctors at Marigold Meadows had tried to wire me up to their computers to quadruple their calculating power. Others claimed however that I'd never been to a mental hospital: that story had been a cover for two year spent working on secret projects for the Pentagon. Likewise: speculation on my current line of research led to stories every bit as incredible as those about my past.

I could only learn about these rumors third-hand. They seeped out of my laboratory and trickled through the alimentary canals of Zelosophic U. like the juice from a wad of chewing tobacco . It had been observed that I worked in my lab from very early morning until 8 or 9 o'clock at night; in addition the janitors could testify that a few dozen monkeys were held there in cages. With some pardonable exaggeration it was claimed that I put my animals through their paces in weird contraptions of my own design and construction. Also that I'd been overheard talking to them. That much was true: I've always talked to myself, non-stop and at great length. In the neighborhood of my monkeys it was not surprising that I might incorporate them as members of my audience.

Friends and strangers alike combined these facts to come up with their own astonishing conclusions: that I was training the monkeys to do higher mathematics; that I was trying to accelerate their evolution by subjecting their brains to radioactivity; that I'd developed IQ tests showing that some monkeys were geniuses! The cook at the Student Union cafeteria told everybody that I'd hooked up the monkeys as a computer that functioned through telepathy.

The learned world revealed itself as superstition-prone as the unlettered rabble. Wiegenlied Wissenschlaf whispered to his wife that I was using the monkeys merely as toys, diversions from my feverish intellectual activity. The sadistic experiments I ran on them, he told her, helped me to pass the time while my mind was pre-occupied with real science: Hopf Algebras over prime-dimensional Lie groups!

Wissenschlaf's wife called up the Anti-Vivisection League. A week later one of their investigative teams stormed into my lab without invitation or introduction. They made a thorough inspection; but of course the accusations were groundless. I treated my monkeys better than I did my associates.

That's just one example of the kind of trouble I was running into because of all the crazy rumors being circulated around campus about what I was doing in my lab. In February of 1964 Harry Malakoff stopped over for a visit. He bore no grudge against me. I can testify that his pleasure at seeing me so well off after years of neglect was sincere. Yet when he returned to Agassiz Hall he went around telling everyone that I was using higher

mathematics to prove Creationism, and such nonsense! I never returned to Agassiz Hall. Thanks to Harry's story-telling I doubt they would have left me in through the front door.

Sadly Alter Buba was no longer on campus. One can be certain that he would have continued to carry a torch in my defense. I'm sorry to say that it would only have contributed to the universal misunderstanding. Lots of young talent came pouring into the department from Princeton in the 60's, with brand-new PhD's and brimming with the latest jargon, and he was forced into retirement. After decades of seeing little of the world beyond the inside of a classroom, he decided to spend his final years in a whirlwind of travel. It seems that he was in Hong Kong when he learned, probably through correspondence with someone in the department, that Aleph McNaughton Cantor was making a comeback. He immediately canceled all of his travel arrangements and took the first available flight back to the States. He arrived in Philadelphia in time to attend my public defense of my thesis on January 17, 1965, and died the next morning of a heart attack.

Stimulated by the access to better resources my research made rapid progress. In February I made up a pile of all the research journals produced from 1959 to 1961 and dumped it into the trash. A similar fate awaited everything done after 1962. It surprised me very much to discover that whatever was meaningful in my research had been done in a single year, between 1961 and 1962. After that I was too depressed to realize that I was going around in circles.

The first draft of the thesis was written up in September. From then on it was clear to me that there would be no trouble meeting the December deadline. Just about the time that I was looking for ways of covering the costs of preparing a hundred copies of the thesis, Princeton University Press stepped in with an offer of advance royalties for a book: *Two Decades of Scientific Achievement: The Collected Papers of Aleph Randal McNaughton Cantor* . It would include my paper on the moons of Jupiter, a small collection of published communications in Number Theory, and the thesis. The commission for writing the preface had already been handed to Hans Mengenlehre, now finishing up his sentence in a jail in Trenton for embezzling during his tenure as mayor of Montclair, New Jersey. The postscript was handed to Wiegenleid Wissenschaft. Clearly Dr. Bob Boolean knew how to pull strings when the occasion warranted it.

Entering my dorm room late at night I would often stop to gape, open-mouthed with astonishment into the mirror above the chest of drawers, and shout :

*I really am going to get out !!*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*