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- #WOW

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Write your own review here¹:

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(*Your name*)

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I'm O.K. Doc!

A Postmodern (A Postmortem)
Epistolary Correspondence

Edited by E. Louis Natick



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Cover Art by William Blake “Ancient of Days”
(front) and “Los entering the Grave” (back cover)

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for all your hard work. This book is dedicated to you. That is, of course, assuming you like it. If you don't, keep your opinion to yourself and please pass the book on to someone else, in which case it is then dedicated to them. Should by some strange coincidence you be the person the book was passed onto and *also* not like it...well, this gets a little more complicated. In this highly unlikely event this book is dedicated to the first person in the chain of book-passing to like it. Should no link be found to enjoy the book, this dedication goes out to those who speak favorably about the book regardless of whether they like it or not.

On second thought, since so much work went into doing this book, it is dedicated to everyone willing to buy and *attempt* to read it. And since you are currently reading the dedication you are obviously attempting to read the book...in which case it is dedicated to you.

Thank you for all your hard work.

From the original epistolary

...a letter from the apostle Paul to the
Corinthians...

...I'm talking like a madman - I'm more; in labours more
abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more
frequent, and oft near death. [...] I've suffered wreckage, a
night and day I've been in the deep. [...] in perils in the sea,
in perils among false brethren...

(2 Cor 11:23-26;31)

...the Corinthians never wrote back.

Chapter -5

I Need Your Help

Dear Dr. Caspers,

You don't know me, but I need your help. I'm currently editing a book on evolution and have come to realize that the topic is far more complex than I originally anticipated. I'm committed and under great pressure to release the book within the next year.

Unfortunately, all of the material I have thus far received has been in line with the two classic theories of evolution. I'm looking for something different! I want something special, something that has never been attempted before, which is why I'm turning to you for possible assistance.

A mutual friend, Dr. Miller, has given me your name along with exceptionally high accolades. She has told me that you are somewhat of an expert in the field. She also mentioned that your ideas are a little less traditional and even a touch on the radical side. In fact, she said they were downright scary! As you know, fresh ideas (not to mention scary ones) are a rare commodity in this field, so I'm looking to you for something more revolutionary (evolutionary?).

I must confess, while I am an expert in editing books, I am *not* an expert in the field of evolution. Your insights would very much further my cause: my objective is to confront readers with ideas they have never encountered before, ideas that will stir their imagination and inspire discovery.

If you are interested, I will fax you a copy of the contributions I have put together so far for your review – your addition would be much appreciated. I'm sure you have a very tight schedule and you may have other priorities – nonetheless I hope you can find the time to

add a chapter and be a part of this endeavor. As an aside, since all proceeds will be given to local scholastic charities, I'm afraid your "honoraria" payment would, at best, be minimal.

Minimal, too, should be the number of pages. We have packaging issues and the book cannot exceed a pre-specified thickness. Currently I can only allot three pages for your contribution.

I eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kelly

Chapter -4

Vitacide

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I thank you for your letter and would gladly offer to contribute some of my work to your book. In truth, your timing could not be better: I just completed my own theory of evolution some weeks ago. It was something I had been working on for a few years but only recently found the time to bring to fruition. I was essentially in search of a publisher when I received your letter. The manuscript is actually for an entire book on evolution. It is 224 pages long split into 24 chapters but I have scythed it down to 3 pages no problem. I could probably cut it down to three words if I had to! Basically the title sums up the whole book anyway.

My ideas are, apparently, slightly too radical for some magazines and the two scientific journals (which will remain unnamed) to which I have sent a copy for publication, have turned it down on the grounds of its, and I quote, "disquieting and distressing content." Even the publisher whom I have been working closely with for several years now and who has published a number of my essays refused to issue it simply because of its thesis (it makes me wonder what the criteria for selection and publication are and what motivates publishers these days?). Since you, however, are looking for exactly this kind of revolutionary theory, I believe it will be an ideal

contribution to your book. If your objective truly is to “stir”, then this composition may just be your Cuisinart. Enclosed is my paper, which I hope you will take great pleasure in reading and find useful to your endeavor. The only compensation I require is your satisfaction. It is not necessary to fax me a list of the contributions you have thus far been able to collect. With as strong a reference as Dr. Miller I have not the slightest doubts, qualms or hesitations in donating my thoughts to your purpose. In fact, when it comes to Dr. Miller, whatever she might suggest becomes my priority, indeed, she *is* my priority. And besides, I don’t have a fax! Furthermore, no compensatory "honoraria" will be necessary, since I very much endorse any cause you and Dr. Miller may want to further.

Best regards,
Dr. Oliver Caspers

P.S.- I tend to work on a first-name basis, so please feel free to address me simply as Oliver if you feel comfortable doing so. “Titles are labels and labels are blinders.”

Attachment

Vitacide: the Causa Finalis of Evolution

Vitacide: the Causa Finalis of Evolution

In my beginning is my end.

- T. S. Eliot

Evolution!

For a century and a half since Darwin set out on his fateful voyage we have looked at Evolution from an historical perspective: How species evolved, how they adapted to survive, or failed to do so and became extinct. We've dug up the past to illuminate the present. We've even searched for the origins of Life, the moment of conception and have elaborated a plethora of theories to explain the perhaps inexplicable.

But that is not all that Evolution entails. Evolution is much more than a term denoting the "origin of species". It is much more than an historical description of changes taking place in lineage. It is a philosophy, a way of perceiving the world. It is a paradigm, a belief system through which the world is viewed as a world of relentless change and alteration. And as such, it is a signpost to the future and to what inevitably must come. It is a roadmap of Destiny!

How is that, you ask? Let me explain: According to the Ehrlichs, 98% of all species that have ever existed on this

planet have become extinct². 98% have passed into oblivion, have been replaced, or as I would like to call it, have been *overcome*, with nothing but fossils as the lone record of their passing. The memory of organic matter is written in stone.

It is this *overcoming* that is the essence of Evolution. Species always evolve *into* something else and, in doing so, leave their origin behind. The old patterns fade away to become replaced. The evolved progenies, as it were, commit paternal slaughter simply by virtue of being what they are: different. The essence of Evolution is destruction!

This *overcoming*, this destruction, this Evolution is an intrinsic principle of Nature: Nature *is* in constant flux. In fact, the only thing that is *invariable* in Nature **is** this flux, this *overcoming*. Yet if Nature is subject to *overcoming*, it must, itself, eventually be *overcome*. It also must evolve into something beyond itself, and, in doing so, be destroyed. It must itself perish, become extinct!

But wait, how could Nature possibly perish? How can such a perfectly functioning pattern be *overcome*? How can Nature *overcome* itself to bring about its own extinction?

² Cf. Paul and Anne Ehrlich: *Extinction: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Species*. Random House, New York, 1981.

The answer I propose is simple: suicide! To bring about its own dissipation, Nature must commit suicide. It must literally *undo* itself. But how can Nature *undo* itself, or to speak figuratively, from where will it get the razor with which to sever its own arteries? From whence shall come the revolver to hold against its temple? Answer: Nature must create it, or to put it more precisely, it must *evolve* it. *Evolution*, itself, will be the executor.

To do so, to *overcome* itself, Nature must itself *evolve* a species that will bring about Nature's destruction. It must evolve a race, which will not only *overcome* itself, but *overcome* **all** of Nature in the process.

What would the characteristics of such a species be?

What traits would this species have to have? First and foremost, it would have to conceive of itself as something separate, something apart from nature. It would have to become conscious of its own existence, and be so “full of itself”, so dense, that it would think of itself as not existing in the same dimension, but instead, consider itself better and higher than the rest of nature.

Eventually this "density" would result in a collapse of the natural order and culminate in an attempt to attain dominion over Nature. It would do this primarily by studying Nature and its principles and finding ways to

elude and even manipulate its laws, from weather control to the very fabric of Life itself: the genes.

Furthermore, the inherent natural tendency of all species to opt for ultimate survival will need to be suppressed. Especially this species' image-makers, the alpha males and females, would need to stifle their own natural instinct for continued existence by valuing material possessions and wealth higher than the life of the individuals producing it. Power will play a central role, especially the power over the own species, since the power will need to be used to influence all the other members of the species to follow along and even support the destruction. It is only through this total disregard for Life and Nature that the conditions and circumstances through which resources are squandered freely with no thought of the consequences can be achieved. And the more Nature is drained, the closer this species will come to fulfilling its ultimate purpose, its inescapable Destiny: genocide or rather *vitacide*: the deliberate and systematic destruction of all life, not just the destruction of a category, i.e. genus, but of Life, of *vita*, itself.

This extinction can be partaken slowly, through such industrial results as ozone depletion, overpopulation, and deforestation or it can come about by a "Big Bang," such as global-thermo-nuclear war. In any case, the species of

which we have spoken will have fulfilled its destiny in the cycle of evolution. It will have brought Nature to where it must inevitably be brought: the grave.

Thus, from an evolutionary point of view, we can truly say that the coming to be of such a race or species would inexorably lead to the final conclusion of the circular process and pattern of Nature. Or to put it poetically, in its beginning is...

...The end.

"All I can say is that I am ready to commit suicide."

Charles Darwin to Joseph Hooker

March 1875

Oliver Caspers

Freiburg im

Breisgau

Chapter -3

A Minute Detail

Dear Dr. Caspers,

I'm afraid there has been a slight misunderstanding. As much as I don't want to be yet another person to turn down your theory for publication – I'm afraid I have no choice on the grounds that my book's subject is on the evolution of *stars*, not the evolution of Nature. In the urgency of my letter to you I must have neglected to mention this detail.

There is no way for me to repay you for the time you have taken to respond so diligently. I take full responsibility for writing you under the assumption that you were an astrophysicist. While I am no expert on evolution (of any kind), your ideas are indeed quite revolutionary and certainly scary. Dr. Miller was absolutely correct in her assessment of your work. I have never read anything quite like it. The future sounds a little bleak. Let's hope that nature won't evolve any species so frightening for quite some time. Too bad we can't tell it to see a good therapist.

Anyway, perhaps we can work together in the future (before nature evolves, obviously! I don't know what your ETA on this is.)

*'Sorry' is merely a word,
...but it's all I have.
- Philip Willington*

Sincerely,

Christopher Kelly

Chapter –2

Unicide

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I thank you for your response, yet I will not allow you to take responsibility for the "misunderstanding." You were quite right, of course, to suspect that I, being a renowned astrophysicist, would understand you to be referring to the evolution of stars, not Nature. However, I have been so much caught up in my own reflections on the subject of the evolution of Nature that I was unable to look beyond that immediate scope. It is I who must apologize to you for putting you in such an awkward position. I can certainly understand the confusion you must have felt upon reading my essay. Perhaps that is why you missed the point. I hope you will accept my sincerest apologies. However, I do not believe that our correspondence should be considered entirely fruitless. It just so happens, by mere coincidence, that I have an essay ready, finished just recently, which may go very well with the subject of your volume: the evolution of stars. It, too, is rather scary. If it should fit your needs and expectations, you are more than welcome to use it for your book. Should you need any further assistance, I would be very glad to be of help. The field of astrophysics is a vast one, and one to which I have a special affinity. I am always

very grateful to be given the opportunity to share my enthusiasm for the cosmos with other people.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Oliver Caspers

Attachment

Unicide: the Causa Finalis of the Evolution of Stars

Unicide: the Causa Finalis of the Evolution of Stars

In my beginning is my end.

- T. S. Eliot

Evolution!

For three and a half centuries since Galileo gazed through his fateful spyglass we have looked at Evolution from an historical perspective: How stars evolve, how they adapt to changing internal pressures, or failed to do so and became extinguished. We've dug up the past to illuminate the present. We've even searched for the origins of the Universe, the moment of conception and have elaborated a plethora of theories to explain the perhaps inexplicable.

But that is not all that Evolution entails. Evolution is much more than a term denoting the "origin of stars". It is much more than an historical description of changes taking place in the cosmos. It is a philosophy, a way of perceiving the Universe. It is a paradigm, a belief system through which the Universe is viewed as a Universe of relentless change and alteration. And as such, it is a signpost to the future and to what inevitably must come. It is a roadmap of Destiny!

How is that, you ask? Let me explain: According to the Lugnars, 98% of all the stars that have ever existed in this Universe have become extinguished³. 98% have passed into oblivion, have been replaced, or as I would like to call it, have been *overcome*, with nothing but remnant light as the sole record of their passing. The memory of a star's shining is written in light years. It is this *overcoming* that is the essence of Evolution. Stars always evolve *into* something else and, in doing so, they leave their origin behind. The old patterns fade away to become replaced by light and radiation that travel through the universe long after the star itself has disappeared. The evolved progenies, as it were, commit paternal slaughter simply by virtue of being what they are: different. The essence of Evolution is destruction! This *overcoming*, this destruction, this Evolution is an intrinsic principle of the Universe: The Universe *is* in constant flux. In fact, the only thing that is *invariable* in the Universe **is** this flux, this *overcoming*. Yet if the Universe is subject to *overcoming* it must, itself, eventually be *overcome*. It also must evolve into something beyond itself, and in doing so, be destroyed. It must itself perish, become extinguished.

³ Cf. Patty and Andrew Lugner: *Extinguishing: The Causes and Consequences of the Disappearance of Stars*. Conscious Quarters, New York, 1981.

But wait, how could the Universe possibly perish? How can such a perfectly functioning pattern be *overcome*? How can the Universe *overcome* itself to bring about its own extinguishing?

The answer I propose is simple: suicide! To bring about its own dissipation, the Universe must commit suicide. It must literally *undo* itself. But how can the Universe *undo* itself, or to speak figuratively, from where will it get the razor with which to sever its own arteries? From whence shall come the revolver to hold against its temple? Answer: the Universe must create it, or to put it more precisely, it must *evolve* it. *Evolution*, itself, will be the executor.

To do so, to *overcome* itself, the Universe must itself *evolve* a category of star that will bring about the Universe's destruction. It must evolve a star, which will not only *overcome* itself, but *overcome* all of the Universe in the process.

What would the characteristics of such a star be? What traits would this star have to have? First and foremost, it would have to become something separate, something apart from the rest of the Universe. It would have to become so "full of itself", so dense, that it would not exist in the same dimension, but instead, exist in a dimension outside of space/time.

This would happen if the density and mass of the star increased so much, that the distance between the electrons and the nucleus of the atoms of which it is made collapsed. It would do this primarily by attracting so much mass to it, that it would eventually even cause the collapse of the very fabric of Space itself: the neutrons⁴.

The spacial collapse of the neutrons themselves would mean that the entire star no longer has dimension: all that near-infinite mass would collapse to a single, one-dimensional point, infinitely heavy, infinitely dense and infinitely small, because there is no space beyond that of the neutrons to keep it spacial. Nothing that came even close to this singularity would stand a chance of “surviving”. All would be sucked in, even light (for this reason we call this category of star a black hole). The larger the hole gets, the more stars are sucked up into it and become extinguished. And the more the Universe is drained, the closer this star will come to fulfilling its ultimate purpose, its inescapable destiny: genocide, or rather *unicide*: the deliberate and systematic destruction

⁴ Editor's Note: An atom has two types of space: first, the space between the electrons and the nucleus (made up of protons and neutrons), which is immense, relatively speaking. If this space, due to high mass density, collapses, the electrons fall into the nucleus, merge with the protons to become neutrons themselves. We then speak of a neutron star, extremely massive, dense and very small. The second space is the space between the neutrons themselves and this is the last vestige of space. Beyond that no space is known (at present).

of all matter, not just the destruction of a category, i.e. genus, but of the *Universe*, of *uni*, itself.

This extinguishing could be partaken slowly, through a gradual spacial collapse in the form of black holes here and there and the subsequent absorption of stars and entire galaxies into these black holes, gaining momentum as more and more mass was absorbed into more and more black holes, or it could come about by a sudden collapse of the entire Universe in on itself, a "Big Bang" in reverse, or a "Big Suck", so to speak! In any case, this category of star will have fulfilled its destiny in the cycle of Evolution. It will have brought the Universe to where it must inevitably be brought: the grave.

Thus, from an evolutionary point of view, we can truly say that the coming to be of such a category of star or black hole will inexorably lead to the final conclusion of the circular process and pattern of the Universe. Or to put it poetically, in its beginning is...

...The end.

"By depriving the sky of some star, one might get to know how that one acted upon us." - Galileo Galilei

Oliver Caspers
Freiburg im Breisgau

Chapter -1

Perfection

Dear Oliver,

Absolutely perfect! Your essay is exactly what I'm looking for. I would not be surprised if it were the lead essay in my book. I wanted to be the first to congratulate you! The ease with which you take the reader through the logical steps and finally arrive at the completely unexpected and incredibly thought-provoking conclusion is uncanny. I was shocked, amazed and delighted at the same time, not to mention a little scared. I felt like a little child on a wonderful journey as I read, hiding under the covers, reading by candle-light.

It is perhaps the most thought-out and revolutionary piece of work I have ever encountered. I have collected many essays that are based purely on the evaluation of scientific data and many others that are purely theoretical, but none that are philosophical. The *philosophical* evolution of stars - that angle has never been attempted. Everyone has been so focused on *how* stars evolve - no one stopped to ask the fundamental question, "*Why* stars evolve?" I don't know where you came up with that idea, but it's sheer genius. I have a feeling it is going to send the astrophysics world into a spin (no pun intended).

In fact, your contribution is so good that it does not matter in the least that it is almost 50% too long. I will simply bump one of the other contributions. Maybe it will be the two-page Carl Sagan obituary retrospective. It was too depressing anyway, too much retrospective.

The official acceptance letter and contract should be in the mail shortly - it's nothing more than the standard release forms and legal fine print.

On a more personal note, of all the people I have worked with so far you seem to be the one most in tune with my objective – that being said, I wonder if I may ask you for one more small favor. While you have made my book nearly complete, I have run into a major obstacle: the introduction. My lack of expertise has truly become an issue at this stage (i.e. the sole part of the book that I must write). I was hoping you could offer some ideas to help make it something other than the usual dry and uninspired “scientific journal” introduction. I want to spark the physicists of tomorrow -- give them new ideas and new ways of thinking. Perhaps you could suggest some passages from your studies or lecturers you know in the field whom I could draw from that would provide just the right kind of inspiration.

I really do appreciate the timely manner in which you have replied to my letters. Not many would take so much time for someone they don't know for a cause they know nothing about.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kelly

P.S. By the way, I tend to work on a last name basis - so please feel free to call me Kel or Kelly - all my friends do.