

## A Note to Mitch

Sitting in the Divisional Board Meeting of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, listening to your inarticulate professor buddy, defend the Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program using “lay” for “lie” and pronouncing “magnanimous” “magnaminous” and such intellectual things,

I had the distinct feeling I was participating in a meeting of the tribal elders, seeing all those pipe-smoking procrastinators, who measure accomplishment in time spent meeting and come prepared to use the entire afternoon whether or not there is something to talk about, as naked painted Aborigines plotting how to keep something from the younger fellows. And, you know, reflection convinces me it's so. When one operates on the hypothesis that every organism “ought to be” (i.e., in terms of its evolutionary history “is”) doing at any particular time the precise thing that, considering its entire repertoire of activities and the entire range of its environmental situations as related to environments past, is maximally reproductive (*sensu latu*), it gives one pause. After reviewing the physical features, mental attributes, and peculiarities of character of each individual at some (distressing) length and realizing at frequent intervals how much I would rather be engaged in telling some lovely lady that being with her is like writing a provocative poem, I told the chairman I had business elsewhere (I did), and I left. Maybe in twenty years but not yet am I a tribal elder.