

**On a Profession of Mystery**  
**Lucas L. Mohan**

During the long years in which I studied as a sniveling undergraduate, there was one eccentric professor whose odd ideas attracted my attention profusely. He taught cryptozoology, a profession which I myself would later adopt. He often reminded us that diversity of ideas as crucially important. Once, however, I made the mistake of questioning one of his most dearly held ideals. He made a sound like the discord of a giant organ. He called me to his desk and asked me, “Robert, what rules the world?” On receiving no answer he thrust the preserved head of a crocodile into my face crying, “The stomach rules the world, man! The great eat. The less, and the less the lesser still!” Such were the professor’s true opinions on diversity of ideas.

In spite of this “liberal” education, I did develop my own ideas mostly quite contradictory to those of the professor. His haven was the west, but mine—the east, the east! For in the murky depths of the Indian Ocean lurk lobe-finned fish over seven feet long and, best of all, thought to have gone extinct millions of years ago. It is this subject that has swallowed up all of my attention for the last twenty years and left me single all this time. I now teach at the University of Berkley in California. There, my childish prejudices held until a very recent event loosened my strict opinions, most of which, as I have mentioned, were quite contrary to those of my eccentric professor. One day, I was teaching my own class and had just finished a lecture when an array of hands shot up (it being the class policy that questions came *after* the lecture, neither before nor in the middle). I was deciding on which question to answer first (they came thick and fast) when I perceived a student had arisen from his seat and was walking, head down, to my desk. He looked straight at me and said, “Sir, I don’t believe—that is, I do not think that dinosaurs have living relatives.” This had been the subject of my entire lecture so I hope the reader will excuse my frustration at having two weeks of hard work boldly criticized. I smile to think how I could have picked the student apart, drowning every idea contrary to my own through logical, scientific argument. Instead I sent him back to his seat, calmly saying such an opinion was not wholly out of the question, and I truly meant to give it a second thought. I believe I gained the final victory that day, for, at that moment I remembered the strict reprimand which once I received. I realized then that a man does not simply *deal*

*with* diversity, but the pursuit of truth. Diversity is important and when it comes to our thoughts it can be a great task in humility; however, in the end we cannot be trapped in the dictatorship of relativism. Truth must be our guiding light.