
everything
is pointless
LOUIE SAVVA

Everything Is Pointless

Louie Savva

Deadication

Eddie. Bernie. Jeff.
Fuck you. Thank you. Love you. Miss You.

About the Author

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Introduction

> The first scientific postulate is the objectivity of nature: nature does not have any intention or goal.
>
> —Jacques Monod

> We may yearn for a "higher answer" but none exists.
>
> —Stephen Jay Gould

> You've got to take the rough with the smooth.
>
> —Nick Faldo

These two essays were written approximately 10 years apart, though they say substantially the same thing. That you live, and you die, so deal with it. Of course

the story is more nuanced than that, but that's the take-home message. Happiness in the Belly of the Space Whale was written first, when I was 26 years old. I remember sitting in a halls of residence (I was working at a university at the time), bashing away at a computer keyboard, feeling the need to communicate the way I saw the universe. I still pretty much agree with most of the words in it. I'm not a big editor of the things I write. We wrote them (the unconscious machinery of my mind and I) and I take credit for them. Misery in the Brain of the Earth Ape (ahhhh see what I did?) was written quite recently (I was 38 years old at the time of writing it). It covers some of the same ground as Happiness, but also touches upon some of the aspects of existence that I am currently tussling with. Locating the human being within the beast. Looking for the author. And in fact finding very little that I could describe as self. Oh well. No-one ever said it was going to be easy. Whatever the future holds, whatever your opinion on these thoughts, whatever your beliefs, your hopes and your dreams. I wish you well for as long as well lasts.

Happiness in the Belly of the Space Whale

Part I

The Beginning of our Universe

The universe began some 15 billion years ago as a single, tiny point of high energy and high temperatures. Was there anything before? Nobody knows, but if there was, it was certainly different from what was to come. Where did the single point of high energy and high temperatures come from? Again, nobody knows. Perhaps this was the first time the universe was to be born, or perhaps it had happened a

million times before. Importantly, it matters not to our particular story.

Modern science can get very close to the beginning of the universe but our theories break down just before the beginning happens. This is because our theories of the very big and the very small, have not yet been unified. One day, it is very possible that this will be accomplished. Until then we must accept that there was a beginning; something which not only seems reasonable, but the evidence for which still remains today. We can start this tale a second after the initial event that triggered the Big Bang. At this time the temperature of the universe was some 10 million degrees Kelvin; much too hot for atoms to exist. Instead their constituent particles existed independently along with a range of other exotic particles. The universe at this time was homogeneous and uniform. However as the seconds ticked by, the universe cooled and expanded rapidly. This process of cooling and expansion, led to transitions in the basic building blocks of the universe. What had started as a quark-gluon plasma, cooled into baryons (the elementary particles) which after some 300,000 years, combined to form the first

atoms. This material was not evenly spread throughout the early universe, but was asymmetrical, forming dense areas. These more dense areas collapsed in on themselves, driven by the force of gravity, to produce the first stars. Some billion years after the Big Bang, the first galaxies formed and light illuminated the darkness of space.

The universe continued to expand and evolve. Older stars exploded in spectacular and devastating supernovae, sending their remnants out in all directions to feed newer stars. Some 10 billion years ago, our own galaxy, the Milky Way formed. It is estimated that the Milky Way contains some 200-400 billion stars, of which ours is just one. Our own solar system formed in much the same way as the rest of the universe. The solar nebula was a large gas cloud, which slowly cooled and condensed, due to gravity, forming a proto-star at its centre. Around it, the gas cooled and condensed into proto-planets. After some 100 million years, the heat within the proto-star reached thermonuclear levels, and our sun, Sol, was born. Around the sun, the proto-planets cooled and coalesced.

The earth is currently estimated to be some 4.55

billion years old. It is one of currently 10 planets, so far identified and one of numerous other astral bodies that orbit the sun. The early earth was an alien place, where life could not survive. At first there was no crust and just a hot molten core. Over time, leftover objects from the beginning of the solar system, such as large asteroids, impacted with the proto-earth, adding material to the chemistry of the planet, but also causing catastrophic damage. One huge encounter with a passing body not much smaller than our own planet, left the earth shattered but with the moon as a permanent companion.

As catastrophic impacts from wandering stellar bodies lessened, the earth cooled. A solid crust allowed water to accumulate, both from the atmosphere and from encounters with comets. Slowly the oceans filled.

The Beginning of Life

How life first developed and where it first originated, is as yet, impossible to say. Some scientists have speculated that life began on other worlds and was transported here deep in comets and asteroids.

What we do know is that life must have developed from inanimate organic molecules (since these make up the basis of all that life we recognise today). So how did organic molecules become something that we recognise as life? One possible scenario is that life did not begin on land (as the land of the early earth was inhospitable and incompatible with life), nor did it begin in the upper levels of the sea (where again increased solar radiation made it incompatible with the development of life). Instead life could have first evolved in the rich, organic soup surrounding deep undersea vents. Today such environments represent niches independent of the sun which support exotic organisms. Deep in the undersea environment, thermal vents could have supplied the energy which would lead to the development of life. As complex organic molecules formed through natural processes (akin to the action of enzymes) some were more successful at replicating than others. Eventually molecules formed which accidentally built cell walls. These more hardy molecules were the very basic building blocks of life. Eventually the energy provided by the hot radioactive core of the planet and millions of years of time and

random recombination and selection resulted in life forms that we could understand as life. Single celled organisms evolved from these very basic beginnings. Mitochondria (the power houses of every cell) are evidence of cells working together. Mitochondrial DNA is passed down only through the female and is independent of your own genetic heritage. It points to a time in the history of this planet, when two different types of cells fused, to work together. Not because of intelligent design, but because random genetic variation between different cells led to some working together. This was tremendously more successful than the alternative mechanisms at the time, and eventually became the dominant form of life. Early organisms could be thought of as simple machines, taking energy from the vents to use it to reproduce and propagate. Better mechanisms developed allowing the organisms to move into new environments and exploit new resources, making them more successful. As cells worked together they began to develop sophisticated adaptations to the environment. This is not a magical process suggesting intelligent design. It is again a consequence of genetic mutations, which could infer new and some-

times dramatically useful new adaptations. Success would lead to propagation; an explosion in numbers and a domination of resources, until the time a new and more successful organism developed. This is how all life evolved. Bacteria, viruses and you!

Beyond the Simple

Life in the sea developed quickly and evolution helped drive this process faster and faster. There were setbacks when space debris smashed into the planet destroying much of life, but eventually the bombardments got less frequent and life had a chance to colonise new areas. Life moved from the sea, to the land and back again. Perhaps the most spectacular life forms yet identified are the dinosaurs. The dinosaurs ruled the planet for some 165 million years. Just ponder that for a moment. Our species, Homo sapiens, evolved some 250,000 years ago. Yet the dinosaurs existed on this planet for a length of time that is practically incomprehensible. They occupied nearly every environment on the planet, from the forests, to the plains, to the seas and the air. They were hugely successful creatures. Our own ances-

tors were merely rodent-like creatures during their reign. And yet, it is we who are here today and not them. The great extinctions of the dinosaurs are not yet fully understood. Maybe it was not one single event, but a myriad of different causes. Perhaps it was galactic debris or global warming. We may never know the exact reasons for the mass extinctions, but we know that they did occur.

With the dinosaurs gone, the mammals had a chance to take advantage of the niches left behind. Mammals quickly adapted from small rodent creatures, into a range of creatures, mimicking the variety of life seen in the age of the dinosaurs. Velociraptor genes were replaced by sabre tooth tiger genes. Importantly brain size increased to allow for ever more complex behaviours and reactions. As species got cleverer, they got more social. Our primate ancestors were in many ways very like ourselves. Humans share approximately 95% of their genes with chimpanzees, so only 1.6% of human DNA is responsible for all the differences between the two species. We share a common ancestor with all of the great apes, who themselves share a common ancestor with all of the primates. It is easy to

see the ways in which we are connected to our closest living relatives. The great apes all share human characteristics and are yet, not human.

Just over 3 million years ago, an ape creature evolved the ability to walk on two legs. Already a social creature, living in small groups of related and semi-related individuals, early humans were very much still apes. Chimpanzees have been documented using tools and early humans no doubt did the same. With the new upright posture, the ape was able to fashion tools, beyond the sticks and stones of its more primitive ancestors. Over time, the new species moved out of Africa, to far reaching corners of the globe. Hunter gatherer man was a proficient killer, working together to accomplish feats never before seen in nature. A small group of men were able to bring down woolly mammoth, elephants and buffalo. Prey, which although dangerous, requiring great skill and cooperation, also provided bounty never before seen. Such prey gave not only plentiful meat, but also bones for weaponry, skins for clothing and shelter. With the prosperity gained by the hunting of big game, social interactions became ever more sophisticated and slowly

one of the most important features of our species developed. Language allowed communication beyond the simple. Spoken language first allowed humans to interact and plan. Be it hunting, gathering other food stuffs, or tackling problems that they encountered. With language came the beginning of something else, unique to humans. Consciousness, of the kind that we recognise, is directly linked to language. We cannot readily imagine really thinking without at least basic symbols to manipulate. Consciousness and language allowed early humans to do things which had never been done before. They built on the earlier tool use and ran with it. Since that early time, technology has been one of the most important things that humans have ever discovered and with it they began to subsume nature itself.

Fire was one of the first technologies the human species harnessed to substantially improve their chances of survival. It had a multitude of uses, from providing vital heat during the winter months to cooking the spoils of their hunting. This meant early man began to live longer. Knowledge could be accumulated orally and passed on to younger group

members. No longer would adaptations need to be encoded within the species' DNA. Now knowledge of the healing plants, the hunting grounds, the stories of their ancestors could be transmitted down the generations and even traded between groups. Innovation and communication have been the driving force of mankind's evolution ever since.

The Beginning of Civilisation

Agriculture began some 8000 years ago in Mesopotamia. This was the beginning of civilisation. The change from man as a hunter gather to a more modern way of living. Agriculture allowed humans to settle in one location permanently and provide a more balanced and predictable diet than had ever been available. This again led to health improvements again leading to further longevity. Settlements allowed work to be distributed amongst members of a group. Skills could be selected. Jobs assigned. Thinkers could now be admonished from hunting and protecting and could turn their attention to the big questions of the universe. Governments were formed to rule over the growing populations. Tech-

nology developed to ease living conditions. Humans began to look at the universe and answer some of the questions that had long evaded them. Religion was one way of answering those questions. Spiritual beliefs had long been part of the human psyche. The greatest fear of all was the fear of death. It was the loss of a family member to eternal sleep. But what happened to the loved ones in the group who died? Perhaps it was incomprehensible to prehistoric man that nothing happens after death. From the very earliest times man had believed in magic. The patterns found in nature hinted at its supernatural basis. The seasons could be predicted from measuring shadows. The universe was ruled by gods who participated and directed human affairs. Something as special as our species could not just die. The Earth was at the centre of the universe, with humans at its pinnacle. And so the human need to explain the universe, coupled with human ego, led to beginning of the cult of the ego. Man was made in God's image. Not only was he the centre of the universe, he believed himself unique in it too. No other animal exhibited the same level of complexity. No animal exhibited consciousness. Men

believed themselves special. Egypt's pyramids are a monument to human ego and the belief in God.

The Modern Age

The belief in God dominated and dictated human civilisation for nearly 4000 years. Religions came and went during that time. Rome once ruled the world, with its pagan take on the nature of the universe only to be dominated by Christianity. With the industrial revolution, the modern age dawned and man dominated nature completely. The Victorian era saw science combat against the religious imperialism of the past and Darwin's Origin of the Species, was perhaps the most instrumental tool which shifted opinion. Other species were driven to extinction. Resources exploited. Man warred on himself in two world wars and millions died. Civilisation brought both bloodshed and increased riches. In the west, life today is very different from that which hunter gatherer man would have experienced. Today, poverty is reduced, education is universal, health care available to many, longevity is far greater than in the past, and child fatality is down. Disease kills fewer

than ever. The internet provides communications over the globe instantaneously. News is instantaneous. Money is instantaneous. America is seen as the ultimate decadent power, when most of its population slowly kill themselves through obesity. Conversely millions die around the globe from starvation in poor developing nations. Money really does make the world go round. The fate of the future is however already set in stone. It is inevitable. As our own deaths are inevitable.

An Imagined but very Possible Future

It is a million years in the future. Over that time mankind had experienced a multitude of disasters. Wars were fought, where billions where killed by weapons of mass destruction. Terrible plagues have devastated the world continuously. Asteroids nearly destroyed civilisation and our species twice. Yet despite this disasters that have always plagued man, some have survived. Our species is not yet extinct. Our unique ability to control technology has always helped us rebuild, far quicker than nature can select the fittest genes. Technologies are developed

which can track distant asteroids and destroy them before they become a danger to the planet. Vaccines are developed, and more importantly, poverty and war are eradicated from the planet. Nanotechnology and biotechnology finally result in solutions to feed the whole population and to ensure fitness and survival for all. Politically the world has united, behind common goals, with shared success. Nobody wants. Nobody feels disenfranchised.

But the planet cannot support a now healthy and altruistic species as ours. rather than wait until there is no more space on the planet, initiatives are developed. Global schemes to continue the human species. First our own planet's unused spaces are utilised. Cities reach both high into the sky, and deep under the ground. The oceans support huge undersea metropoleis, all of which house billions of humans, working together. Even the most inhospitable locations are made habitable by huge biosphere domes. Antarctica is the last continent to be permanently inhabited by substantial populations of humans. The moon is also made habitable connected to the Earth by huge cables with platforms that transport resources and people to our natural

satellite.

Finally space is seen as the ultimate saviour of our species. Man has long known that our sun will wreak the ultimate punishment on our planet. If we are to continue for longer still, the near infinite possibilities that await us in space must be sought. Mars provides a second home from home and is terraformed and adapted to be very much like a second earth. With great experience of developing undersea cities, Europa's icy undersea world is slowly made another resource for humans to exploit. However the solar system is no safe haven. Science may not have not developed light speed travel, but advances in medicine have allowed much increased longevity and suspended animation. The first deep space human colonies are sent on spaceships in suspended animation and sent with sophisticated AI that can find new homes. If new homes are not found, then technologies exist to adapt our own human being to improve or adapt our design to fit the myriad of planets that can sustain life, of a sort.

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The Death of Home

It is 6.5 billion years in the future. The Sun sits large in the sky of the dying earth. The land has been scorched bare. The conditions on land are no longer conducive to life. Very little can survive in the high temperatures, caused by the ever growing sun. Life however continues in the oceans (not just in sealed scientific observatories). The polar icecaps no longer exist but have given the oceans a reprieve from death. Slowly the water evaporates into space and the seas become more and more saline. Life is slowly poisoned in the oceans until only the hardiest organisms and the human probes, survive.

Finally the oceans are boiled away and that which had been solid rock becomes molten lava once more. The earth becomes almost as it was at its birth and yet this is its death. As the sun grows ever closer, the temperature on earth increases until the earth itself is boiled away, inside the corona of the sun. It is the death of home. No longer will the place that we evolved on exist. It will now, just be a memory. The death of earth is watched as humans continue their existence on Mars and elsewhere. The increase

in temperature which has destroyed the earth, has given Mars a new lease of life. Its frozen oceans are reborn and life continues on our sister planet. Terra-forming Mars began millions of years ago to support the ever growing human population. It is now a lush, almost earth-like place. But the fate of Mars is ultimately sealed as Earth's was. We live on Mars until the sun engulfs it, as it did the Earth and another home boils away. Finally the sun collapses in, when the hydrogen has depleted, ending in a huge explosion, signalling the death of the solar system.

Just as the solar system died, our galaxy contains an even greater danger. The Milky Way contains a super-black hole at its centre. One that has fed on the galaxy for millennia and will one day consume our own dead solar system. Technology has allowed us to escape both the dying solar system and its annihilation in the super black hole. Had we not been able to leave the galaxy, our eventual fate would be to join our dead solar system in the black hole. But in 10 billion years, our descendants may watch the death of the Milky Way. A galaxy that has been our home for many millions of years.

But let us imagine that humans are spread far and wide. Far flung we are, across the universe. There has been evolution due to the isolation of populations. Darwin's finches are reborn amongst a myriad of galaxies. But unlike Darwin's finches, humans have had technology by their side for millennia. Genetic engineering and nanotechnology have led to a variety of adaptations being incorporated into the human genome. An ability to process hostile atmospheres, increased longevity and resistance to disease has given humans an ability to adapt to almost any environment. Black holes have been harnessed to supply near infinite power supplies, supporting billions and billions of colonies. War, famine, disease are at an end. Our energy needs are met and over compensated. No body wants. Machines have reached a complexity far outstretching our own meagre abilities. Natural selection reborn with nanotechnology, genetic engineering and cyber-psychology. We share the universe with creatures much greater than ours. Men stand on alien worlds and experience things that no one had ever imagined possible. They traverse worm holes and develop longevity beyond our imaginings.. We are

a hybrid species. Homo sapien no more. Part alien, put computer, put earth ape. We find ways of transferring consciousness into different mediums. Of preventing physical death from ending our conscious experience. It can live on in and be transferred into cloned bodies. We live then, in a time when man is invincible. Can withstand any obstacle. Where there is no pain, suffering or death. We have become gods. We have come a long way since that first Big Bang.

The Space Whale

It is 160,000 billion years in the future. Just as we have seen the evolution of life on earth adapt and change, evolution can occur on a much larger scale. Over the millions of years technology and biology have worked together to produce a pinnacle. Yet this process is intelligent design. Conscious, intelligent creatures such as our own species were instrumental in developing this pinnacle. Now however there is only being left in the universe, an Omega Point. A place where evolution culminates. Long ago a creature was developed, which could store

all the consciousness of every biological organism it encountered. When it did so, the organism would be incorporated into the creature, and yet remain individual Inside the creature, experience was very much like the idea that our ancestors had of heaven. Yet this is not a mystical place. Conscious creatures from throughout the universe have long sought the Belly of the Space Whale, as a refuge till the end of time. Indeed, inside its belly, a billion, billion consciousnesses experience near eternal-life. Their life spans increased far beyond their genetic and biological potential. Those that survived and successfully entered the belly of the Whale, have lived in a near heavenly existence. It is an incorporeal being. Where once we had been purely physical, now in the belly of the space whale all life, but one, is consciousness. Constrained by biology, it is one and everything; it is eschato. It has watched the universe expanding at an ever increasing rate. It has seen galaxies that were once neighbours, now sit on the opposite sides of near infinite expanses. More worryingly it has watched stars die, and no new ones form to take their place. One by one, that which had illuminated the darkness was being snuffed out

for ever. Now it would take more time to get from one side to the other, than has ever existed. Only a handful of stars are left and they are too far apart to keep the darkness from falling.

The Two Ends

The whale chose its final resting place along time ago. It sits next to the gigantic black hole, which once sat at the heart of the Milky Way. It has long destroyed our own solar system, but has sustained the Whale with energy. However the Whale has watched the matter get less common and has even seen the end in the darkness. It can do nothing to stop the inevitable death of it, and every consciousness in the universe. And then the light, which illuminated the universe, soon after its birth, is gone. The universe is now a cold, dark place. With no life. No activity. Nothing. The end. The only other likely scenario, is that sometime in the distant future, the universe will begin to contract. Where it had first expanded exponentially, now the dark energy that fills space, began to pull it back in on itself, on the inevitable path, back to a single point.

The contraction of the universe, causes massive explosions. Those populations not destroyed by black holes or supernovae, move inwards to the centre of the universe, watching the sky shrink.

We are again left with the whale. It has saved as many consciousnesses as it can. Billions live out their conscious experience in its belly. This time it orbits another black hole, feeding itself and sustaining itself, this time at the centre of the universe. The point where it all began, and the place where it would all end. Instead of the black hole dying, the gravitational effects of the rapidly contracting universe overcome the whale, until the universe reaches a single point. And then everything that was our universe is the single point again. Nothing exists. No remnants. No archaeology. It is wiped clean. Perhaps it starts again, with another big bang. Perhaps not. But if it does start again, it will not result in the same universe. It will be another universe, an alien universe. Life may develop, but it will not be us. And it will not know of us, except in the ponderings of philosophers and cosmologists, theorising our existence. But perhaps it won't start again. And then that really would be the end.

Part II

What to do now?

So then. We stand now with the meaning to life, the universe and everything. There is no purpose. No design. No God. No survival of death. No survival after the end of the universe. One day everything in this universe will no longer exist. Does that knowledge about the universe have an effect on our lives in the Twenty-First Century. Today we have a world divided by poverty. People die every day. 2005 began with the death of some 350,000 people, caused by a tsunami sweeping across the pacific. Hurricanes brought both the civilised and developing countries to their knees, revealing the very fragility of civilisation. Everyday hundreds of babies are born, increasing our population year in and year out. Billions of humans have existed and billions may exist in the future. Yet from our own personal perspective, we are special and unique.

But unlike previous generations, we know that the sun does not revolve around the earth. That we are not the centre of the universe. We are in

fact, an insignificant aberration. The universe become aware of itself. Organic, inanimate molecules, assembled in such a configuration, which produces bodies, brains and us. We are an accident of natural selection. Had the dinosaurs not been wiped out; had the Earth been slightly nearer the sun, or slightly further; had the moon destroyed the planet; had Homo sapiens not become the dominant human species; we would not be here. The list is endless. We are not here through divine intervention, but accident. We are driven by our ability to potentially solve any problem; except a way to solve our inevitable annihilation with the rest of the universe.

Since there is no design and no purpose to the universe and that one day the universe itself will die, what should we do? The universe become conscious indeed, but what to do with that consciousness? Pause for a moment and take a look at your body. Each part is certainly no accident. Importantly, more than anything, your being highlights design. You are a pinnacle on this planet. The most technologically advanced; the only creature to achieve consciousness in the form that we recognise; the most powerful and perhaps in many ways, the

most successful – so far. This success, more than any other fact, has been responsible for one of humankinds' greatest fallacies. Most refuse to recognise our true nature; our true being. Why we are the way we are?

We have already seen that to get to this point has taken millions of years of evolution. That life upon this planet has occupied many and varied forms. That we are relative latecomers in a race that has seen the planet dominated by life, in almost every environment. The sun, which has provided life with the energy it needs to assume its complex forms, will one day destroy this planet and all life left upon it. But until the time when the Sun dies, it will provide energy for our planet as it has done for millions of years. We have seen how life first developed and evolved. That life is driven by natural selection. That many more individuals are born, than survive and that survival implies fitness to an environment. Survival of the fittest. Human beings are fit. But, we are the product of natural selection. We have been designed, not by a god, or an intelligence, but by an almost mechanical design process. Random changes in DNA, through mutation, cause new

genes to develop, some of which give advantages to the organism to survive. Swapping genes between individuals, gave even greater survival benefits, as successful genes ensured that they would be passed on to future generations. This is not a conscious process. It is a by-product of the bad genes failing to survive. Energy from the sun and time, has driven this process and led to the most complex biological machines, including our brain.

So a gene's reason for existence is to reproduce itself. That is it. Our purpose is ultimately the same. To propagate copies of our genetic material throughout the universe. Look at your hands. They have a purpose. They are amazingly useful. They allow us to manipulate tools. As we have seen, at first hands fashioned basic weapons and tools for collecting food. But over the last 250,000 years and with successive generations, human hands have done things which no other animal can comprehend. Hands have built atom bombs, releasing the power of $e=mc^2$. Hands have gone into space, and orbited our planet. Hands have built space probes that have even left the solar system. But where do hands come from?

We can look at the fossil record and hypothesise that hands probably first developed with amphibious creatures, some 20 million years ago, for wading through dense mangrove swamps. The amphibious creatures evolved from fish. Individuals that had mutated genes, giving them slightly more hand like flippers, were able to survive in the swamps, better than their flipper kin. Natural selection and time and energy from the sun drove the process. Your hand was once a flipper.

Step back a second. If your hand used to be a flipper, what about your whole being. And yes. Your genes are the culmination of this time, energy and natural selection process over the last 20 million years. You are not made by god, or intelligence. You were the product of natural selection, a descendent of the organisms that were able to survive and reproduce. So what of that purpose.

When the universe ends there will be no genes. There will be no propagation. There will be no energy. No resources to exploit. No sun. Nothing. Therefore following even our evolved predisposition to spread our genes, means nothing. It is itself a bad joke. Genes came together and those that lead

to improvement survived. Ever increasing complexity, led to greater improvements. Niches were filled. Resources exploited. All to propagate genes. And finally natural selection was itself overcome and out evolved by our technical prowess. Technological evolution has been the greatest driving force in our development. Your purpose in life is to propagate. And yet, there it is, a futile task and one with no underlying intelligence.

And then we get to the cult of the ego. As man has overcome natural selection's hold, he has developed a sense of infallibility. The idea of man the supreme, gods that would intervene and make the universe better, these are human ideas. Karl Marx called religion the opiate of the people. He was correct. Religion gives purpose and hope to humans. It allows some to live their entire lives with an understanding and reason. It is false understanding and false reason, but this matters not to many humans. However human being is really the opiate of everybody. Every human thing you see around you has been designed and created with a purpose. But since we have no purpose, what point the purpose of our own creations?

We are born into a culture of human being. We are taught about our purpose. Indoctrinated into the cult of the ego. We are taught history, religion, science and art. We are shown a wondrous universe of possibilities. We are given a purpose. Told to strive for something. To make the universe a better place. As children we do not understand the real nature of the universe. We do not understand that one day the entire universe will be dead and that our purpose is in fact futile. Instead we are seduced by ideas that take hold in our brain and feed us with purpose. We are driven by a need for purpose, forced by the biological heritage of millions of years and the cultural heritage of 250,000 years. But what takes hold? Richard Dawkins called them memes. Ideas that reproduce akin to genes. Some memes take hold inside your brain and feed it with purpose. Brains came before memes. It is like software running on hardware. Every year the software is upgraded, updated, not necessarily with better software, just different adapted software. Culture is not dependent on any underlying reality. Culture just requires more than one person to be persuaded of it. Most of us will work and participate in this

illusion of purpose and culture for our entire lives. We will believe that we made a difference to the world. That our lives meant something. We toil at work almost our entire adult lives, to die, believing the lie. What was it for?

Imagine you are on your deathbed. You look back at your life. Were you happy? Did you experience significant periods of happiness? I hope you did. Although I don't really care. What I care about and what you should care about was, did I have a nice life? I would imagine that in the present day, most people would say no. The people starving in Africa. The people toiling in their job that they despise. The alcoholic. The depressive. You didn't have a nice life? Hmmm. Let's just ponder that for a moment. The average western life expectancy is 65 for a man. Just imagine you are that 65 year old. You have worked most of your life. Let's say you're a doctor. An eminent surgeon. You feel you helped lots of people. Many survived because of your actions, because of your great skill. Without you, those people would have died. If you had existed a millennium ago, they all would have died and you would not have been a doctor. You are

great. You are a god. You are just about to die; to give up your membership of the human race.

One day the whole universe will no longer exist. Ultimately nobody remembers. Ultimately nobody cares. There is no Higher Intelligence; No God to let the righteous into heaven. What remains of our atoms will be ripped apart when the solar system dies. And the remnants of that will be destroyed in the big freeze or the big squeeze. One way or another, everything you know will be wiped out of existence.

Okay, at the point of your death, you are given a choice. You have 10 seconds to respond after which you will die. The choice is this. You can either die, having saved all those people, toiled all your life, worked those long hours for the accolade, or you can have those events erased from your personal history and replaced with time with your family and friends. Your loved ones. Happy times. When you smiled and realised that though there is pain and suffering in the world, you and your family are good, safe and happy. Without sickness; without death; without pain. What would your answer be? Spend your life saving lots of people, whose

very existence will be wiped away, as will your own. Your deeds. Your acts. Everything. Or spend the 65 years of your life happy and loved. With no worry. No stress. Just peace. And knowledge that though the universe will one day die (which it is something that you know will certainly happen, with no chance of reprieve) that you and your family spent that brief, unique time that we have together, in this accident which is a universe and that you didn't waste a second. You realised that every moment is precious and was happy. But to return to the cult of the ego.

Every moment is precious. Stop what you're doing. Stop reading and look around you. There will be signs of the cult of the ego. There will be people around you doing a job or you will have a job. Think about what you do for a living. The doctor, the road sweep, the unemployed guy. What difference do you make, to the ultimate outcome of the universe? Some you think? Really? Didn't we just think that the doctor would give up his time to be happy? What is the point in toiling for a future that will never come? Even if tomorrow, all humans worked together to end suffering, pain and

disease, death can never be overcome. The end of the universe can never be overcome. What point in propagating genes throughout the universe, when that universe will one day die. It is a fruitless endeavour. It is like a preparing for a party that will never happen. The birthday will not come. There is no endgame. No final pat on the back. No thanks a lot chum, you really, really made a difference. The people that will pat you on a back are those that are alive now. When you're dead it doesn't matter if you were respected, or thought you made a difference, as you won't know anyone is patting you on the back. So you care what the people around you today think? Why? You do know one day they will all be dead? Why else might you care? Because you think you're important? That's it. You have bought into the cult of the ego. You think that you're special. That in the grand scheme of the universe you played a significant part. Why are you important? One day everything you know will be destroyed. Fuck, "we don't know shit". We know it will one day all end. The first part of this tale talks about happiness in the belly of the Space Whale. Yet that is a best case scenario. An imagining of a possible dis-

tant future. In reality the death of our species will probably come much sooner. If it's not avian bird flu, more world wars, asteroids from outer space, it's the earth being consumed by the sun, or the final end of the universe. One day it will all be gone. That means that you're not special really. You're a brief flash of conscious experience. What does that mean anyway?

As that fleshy analogue computational device sitting between our ears is testament to, brains have got big. They've got big dealing with job number one. Survival. The fittest genes survive. Those best suited to the environment live. Those unable to cope die. That's evolution. What is consciousness then? It is an ability to cope in an ever changing environment. Our brains reached a point where mere assimilation of sensory input analysis and behaviour grew into a sense of awareness which allowed us to do more than ever before. We could develop ideas about situations. How to get across a ravine. How to work together to kill large prey. How to fashion tools to accomplish goals. And that was it. That's how an ape gets to become us.

Look at nature. The simplest life forms like bac-

teria and viruses are far removed from human experience. Even much more complex organisms remain detached from humans due to their lack of language skills and one can suggest, inability to model even basic human like emotional states. An ant is a biological machine. We have seen how natural selections can produce highly complex biological mechanisms, that can work together to propagate their genes. All animals are the same. Humans are no different. Except that our complexity has reached a point of critical mass. Much like a thermonuclear reaction, which requires a threshold of material to be able to produce a reaction. Human species are the only animals which have reached the critical mass of consciousness. And only one human species remains today, to enjoy its unique being.

The ability to cope with and control the environment led to our subsuming nature and technologically evolving. Consciousness allowed this success. With technology and consciousness we have got further than we could possibly imagine from the natural state of the universe. But it means nothing. An ability to problem solve merely leaves us with an overwhelming innate predisposition to better our

conditions and solve our problems. Except there is one problem that cannot be overcome. Death is the end. Even if we can extend life spans to the point of near infinite, the universe will one day die. Today the average lifespan is 65 in the west. Not long. So unless we are supremely rich, we cannot hope to live longer. Therefore our time is limited, our experience brief, our purpose an illusion. Break free from the shackles that WE have created around us. The whole thing that you partake in everyday, the whole human world is a construction made to give us a purpose. A purpose which as we have said, is pointless. Would you rather toil under a pointless illusion or would you rather know the truth?

So what do we do with this truth? Well I don't know about you but I now see the unit of existence as happiness. If I am not happy every second that I am alive then I am not making the most of life. That being said, I'm not being an idealist. I'm not suggesting it's easy to achieve this ends. But if we should strive for something, it should be happiness. But what kind of happiness? Happiness is a chemical balance in your brain. Endorphin release; equivalent, if you like, to being a heroin addict. So

then we should all acknowledge we are happiness junkies and do what? Well since an AA meeting for happiness sounds to me like the very opposite of how I want to live my life, perhaps then we should do whatever makes us happy. Believe in fairies. Believe in God. Believe in a purpose. It makes no difference to me, or the outcome of the fate of the universe. But it makes you feel better. It causes endorphin release. The junkie gets his fix. The world is good again. I don't want to buy into the illusion, the cult of the ego. But it makes no difference if I do or don't. Ignorance may really be bliss. But then it makes me happy to know that I'm not living an illusion forced onto me by others. It is an illusion of my own construction, tailored to my biology, to give me the most satisfying endorphin-release-happiness-fix. I choose what's important. No king. No government. No thing can change the fate of the universe. Who are you to me? My family. I love them. Love is the ultimate endorphin release. My family yet to be? I will love them too. My friends and friends to be. The same. What is love and where did it come from? Well that warm feeling that being in love gives you, evolved as we shared

nests as apes in Africa. It is a primeval urge to be part of a group, to care about your family members, to love. For those that didn't, died alone and didn't propagate. Thank the genes for love. It is wonderful that we can experience it. It releases endorphins and makes me warm. Thank you DNA.

But you have to feed your family. You have to participate with those that live in the illusion. So by all mean toil to a degree. If you want to be a rock star or a nuclear scientist, do it if it makes YOU happy. But understand that it is meaningless. If it's fun to you, do it. What about hurting others? That is a difficult question. Ultimately it makes no difference what you do. But I have no wish for anarchic tyranny. I don't advocate indulging your sickest fantasies on random strangers. But then what does it really matter? Jack the ripper, Hitler and disease have all led to the deaths of people. All will be wiped from existence one day. It is your own personal happiness which is important. Your conscious experience. The memories and faculties which make you, you. That wet pink organ whose physical properties result in you being you. So as long as your brain's happy, what does the rest of

the purposeless universe matter.

Be left wing. Care about people. Help people. Recycle. Save the whale. If it makes you feel happy to help people, if it releases endorphins in your brain, then do it. But admit that that is why you do it. That is the ultimate purpose behind your action. Perhaps you do it because you believe that there is an afterlife and you will be rewarded with everlasting light and beauty. Lucky you. Isn't that a selfish reason to help. Fear of retribution. Desire for reward. Everything is ultimately illusion. Why delude yourself. Why dance a tango with ideas and man made notions? Do what you want and try to hurt as few people as possible. Sounds like good advice.

So here I am. Happy. I have a loving, happy family. I work, but I do not think I make a difference to the outcome of the universe. I don't think I'm important. It allows me to live with my family and enjoy as much time as possible with them and my friends. I experience as much as I can. If you are reading this at a time when you can cross the galaxy, please take advantage of it. I want to experience things no other person has ever done. I want

to stand on an alien world for the very first time. I want to see the future. Why? Because it would give me a kick. I'd smile. Endorphins would be released. I would be happy. On my deathbed would I want to change a thing? Probably. Would I change it? Never. It was fun. Well with that hope, that one day mankind will overcome its difficulties about living together and will develop technologies that will enable reanimation of the long dead, we can go about our existence laughing. One day everybody, everything, every atom will be dead. Even if we can cheat death for a little while or for a near eternity in the belly of the space whale, we will all cease to exist. So be happy as much as you can and enjoy the rest of experience...

Misery in the Brain of the Earth Ape

When cavemen decided the names of your children...

A group of cavemen are sat around a fire. One says rather dramatically: "ug ug megug". Loosely translated: "and lo, forever our children, and our children's children shall follow this rule!". What rule? Well, for the sake of this discussion, it matters very little. But let's qualify it. Our ancestors here have created a diktat: that they, and all the generations to come must call their first born sons Bugerarder and their first born daughters Takeitlikeapro. Their god

has demanded it. All the cavemen agree to follow this rule, and they all agree that future generations must follow this rule too. No ifs. No buts. In a thousand years the first borns will still bear these names.

Let us move forward that thousand years or so. You are a descendent of these cavemen. You hold in your arms your first born child. You now have a choice. Though you bear the name decreed by your forefathers, the time has come for you to decide. Did that choice made in the distant past, of which you were not party to, or signatory of, did that diktat really remove the volitional power that you are able to at this moment enact? Do your long dead ancestors really get to choose the name of your newly born infant?

Take the laws of the Roman Empire. Of course, many of our laws have some basis in the historical past. I live in Britain, and some of our road network can be traced back to the original roads used by the Romans to bring troops and trade into this country. But at some point in the past the laws of a long dead empire were usurped by a different age. A long dead past cannot have a volitional impact on

the future, except by appealing to those alive at that moment to continue to aspire to their ideals, beliefs, laws and customs.

So at this point in the proceedings, I expect broad agreement. If a group of cavemen decided to sign away the volitional freedom of the human race in perpetuity, I think we can all agree that very few people today are going to choose to follow that diktat from a prehistoric age. The cavemen had their own volitional freedom, they chose to behave in certain ways, hold certain beliefs and follow certain rules. We did not exist and we could not hope to change their volitional choices. They no longer exist and can not really change our experience too. They had their go. Now is our time.

A quick aside. I am not saying that we should not benefit from the past. London is an ancient city. It would be a severe handicap to any generation if the city was levelled or if books and the knowledge within destroyed. No. Building upon the shared experience of humanity is one of the great strengths of our species. That is not the point I am driving at. Patience.

Pond scum is, as pond scum does

Let me very quickly deal with the evolution of life. Very quickly. It is some 4 billion years in the past. There is no life on the planet. A large moon hangs heavy in the sky. Asteroids and comets dump various types of matter as they collide with the Earth in the chaos of the early solar system. We stand in front of a small pool of water. The rock is some kind of clay. And floating in the shallow pool is a kind of scum: a mat of organic molecules, the type of which are found in an abundance in comets. The heat of the day and the cold of the night, along with the electrostatic properties of the clay, interact with the organic molecules. Simply put, some of the molecules line up along the clay surface and the first chain of organic molecules is created. This is a random process. Molecules line up, join together and then detach. This is the precursor of life as we know it. These molecules (free floating in the pool) provide a surface upon which other molecules can attach to. Where the original strings had been constructed on the floor of the clay pool (by being attracted by the electrostatic property of the clay), the

free floating strings can bump into other molecules free floating in the water. Like DNA today, the molecules attract like for like. And as soon as the molecule is fully constructed (a twin of the original string) it detaches and floats out into the pool. One molecule becomes two. And the first self-replicating molecule has been born.

As soon as we have a small pool of self-replicating molecules, Darwin's great process, evolution by natural selection, comes into play. Some molecules are more successful than others. Success here means able to make more copies. For example some of the strings survive for longer than others (their bonds are stronger and thus they can withstand the destructive power of things like cosmic radiation). And copies that make more copies, make more copies. In the beginning then, there was a replicating organic molecule, that in the presence of constituent organic components, creates more copies of itself. Slight variations occur within the pool (radiation can change bonds) and that competition between variants is the very basis of evolution. Molecules get "better" because those less "good" are out-competed.

There is no intent in the naked replicating molecules.

If this thing has a purpose (which it does not), but if it did, it would be to make perfect copies of itself. Nothing more. The fact it makes copies of itself is just a byproduct of the fact it is made from organic molecules, which themselves are wrapped up molecules which can join together (the wrapping is a type of internal join). Bonds don't care if they are joined to internal parts of the molecular structure, or an external molecule. They just bond.

Because the naked replicators are made of organic molecules, there is a surprise twist in the story. Not only can they replicate themselves, but they can also create structure in the world. What do I mean by this? Well the naked replicators are structures already, but the organic molecules can do work too. And to cut a long story short, the first cell originated because a naked replicator evolved that surrounded its organic nucleotide with some kind of protective structure. Where before we had naked replicators competing within a pool, we now have a replicator within a protective environment (a wall surrounding its little part of the shallow pool). And this protection was the basis of a very successful way of doing things.

Life is to rock-pools as thinking is to brains

So life could not have evolved without those original conditions. We look deep into space and we do not see gazelle running between planets. We do not see any evidence for life at all. Though it is unlikely to be completely barren, the universe doesn't seem very hospitable to life. The Goldilocks conditions found upon this planet (just right), were a rare accident. And today, inside each of us, the cells of our body contain tiny self-replicating molecules, nestled safely within the protective confines of their watery pool. The biological evolution of life on this planet has been a perfunctory affair. Evolution is both a simple and complex process, but in essence the more copies that have been produced the more successful the copy is.

Okay. Life has plodded along pretty steadily for billions of years. Worms. Fish. Dinosaurs. Birds. Mammals. You know the story. Biological evolution has created some pretty crazy creatures. The machines that the replicators have made to spread the copies of themselves are pretty impressive. If we

look at evolution, we can see that the more locked in the organism, the less able they are to adapt to changing conditions. Take for example the crustaceans. It seems immensely useful to have your skeleton on the outside of your body. Instant protection from the world. But on the other hand, that skeleton is an impediment to the growth of certain organs and systems that might be advantageous in the fight for survival. An internal skeleton, whilst it does not protect in the same way an external one does, allows us to hang a lot more off it, and there is always the option of making up for the lack of external protection too: behaviourally you could avoid all danger, like a shrew, or perhaps even construct your own armour from the environment (like a bird's nest or burrow). Not that crustaceans are not a successful family of creatures, but the point is, that the less locked into a system of living you are, the more readily evolutionary solutions can pop up (randomly).

Our ancestors were of the no-armour variety. Small, scared mammals, that lived together in groups. The brain was their strongest asset and over millions of years our ancestors used their brains to out compete other creatures and to survive and reproduce.

Brains are very adaptive organs. They can help you fight predators, find food and mates. Solve problems of all sorts. Brains are bloody important for our survival. Not every organism relies on its brain and brains are not a requirement for evolutionary success. But for a pink fleshy creature with no horns, no large teeth, no external skeleton, our brain is like a swiss army knife of behaviour and understanding.

Two major points then: Life did not begin so as to produce organisms. And brains did not evolve to do the kind of thinking that we humans engage in. The blue whale is the largest organism ever to have existed upon this planet. From a single fertilised cell containing the genetic material (the self-replicating molecule) is built a creature bigger even than a dinosaur. We are the cognitive equivalent of the blue whale.

Let us return to the cavemen. Maybe not those cavemen, because they are already talking. Let's go back a little in time. To an animal that is a type of great ape, a type of human even. They are genetically almost identical to us. But they lack one important element. They do not have spoken lan-

guage. They are in essence, indistinguishable from a chimpanzee or a gorilla. They make tools. They fuck and kill members of nearby tribes. But they have nothing that approaches language, only a system of grunts, shouts, whistles and other sundry noises that they use to express their bare emotions. Humans as we understand them, these are not

Imagine the beginning of language. Names for each other. Who are you? Points at self, "Ug". Points at stranger, "Uggette". (You get the idea). Names for things and objects. The sky. The land. The predators. The prey. Left and right. Up and down. Hungry. Angry. Sad. Hurt. Dead. Think back to the small shallow pool in which life began. The floating scum of organic molecules from which all life evolved. Well the naming words that fill the brain of those early apes are the molecules through which cognition will begin. As more and more words are learnt (or created and shared amongst the apes), the words join together into what some people have described as a memeplex. And just like the evolution that occurs because of competition between the different biological replicators, so to do we get a competition between the cognitive

molecules, the memeplexes. Those that spread and are adaptive survive, and out-compete the less successful memeplexes. The brain of the ape is the pool and life is the thoughts that live inside the brain. Thought is a new type of replicator, a non-physical process entirely dependent upon the physical, just as organic life was entirely constituted from the non-organic.

In many ways, what we are, is the memeplex. Biological life began in that shallow pool billions of years ago and yet nobody would argue that life IS that shallow pool. The pool facilitated the evolution of life and even today we carry aspects of its nature inside of us. That is a consequence of the physical importance of the pool. I have already said, we do not see gazelle running between the planets in the depths of space. Life needed the pool and it cannot completely divorce itself from it. In the same way, the cave into the brain was cracked open by the beginning of language. In slipped a new type of replicating molecule. One that was not a physical object, but that could still be party to the processes of evolution.

Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man

Babies are apes without a hint of human being about them. They are pushed from the womb, not because they are ready to enter the world, but because if they were to leave any later their skulls would not be able to pass through the pelvis of their mother and both mother and baby would die. Since dead mothers and dead babies leave no progeny, there is a selective pressure there: for the mother to give birth at the very latest moment possible, but not so late that the baby's brain is too big. So as compared to its other ape relatives, babies are born earlier than they would naturally like. When a baby is born, it has no language. Following the brief discussion above, the cave has yet to crack open (the pool has water, but no organic molecules), and the memeplex worm of human being has yet to find its way inside. That's okay. Babies have plenty of neuronal development to be getting on with.

We talk to babies and small children. And this process of talking and encouragement is the basis of the beginning of language. When a new vol-

canic island is formed, it begins barren and sterile. Then the winds bring seeds, insects and birds. The ocean currents bring floating visitors. And very soon, a landscape that was alien and dead can become a rich and vibrant tropical paradise. Such is true for the human mind. Without language, the infant would be something very unhuman. Give a newborn to a chimpanzee, and it will turn into a chimpanzee, with no semblance of humanity bar its lack of hair. But we are not finished yet...

What is a self?

I wake up from anaesthesia. Who am I? What am I? Where am I? I reach into the recesses of my mind. Louie. Patient. Hospital. When we ask and answer these questions what are we actually doing? The cognitive machinery of the mind is reaching into our personal filing system and getting the information. It is important to understand that every human being is essentially a clone of one another. Let me introduce the analogy of the river. Every river is the same. Water flows through a landscape or topography. We name rivers and yet the water that runs

through the landscape is continuously changing. It is a truism that you can never stand in the same river twice. The psychological process that is our consciousness is akin to a river. It is continuously changing and never the same in any given moment. Yet it is water. The same H_2O that flows through every other river. So let me draw some stands together.

Imagine a topographical plane. It has a slight incline. Down this incline we send a droplet of water. The droplet follows a path down the plane. We send another and another and another. Like a river in the world, the droplet carves a little path through the plane. Each one leaves behind a record of the path it took. Importantly though, the recorded path causes deviations in the flat plane and makes it more likely that the next droplet will follow the same path. Slowly but surely the path of each droplet carves a river bed into the topography of our plane. Now the droplet has no chance to deviate from the established path. When the rains that fall in Ethiopia finally reach Egypt, they cannot choose to follow a different route than that which has been already carved by the mighty Nile. History dictates the

present.

Consciousness is the water and habit is the topography. Ever since our biology was cracked open and the words of human being poured in, we have continuously reinforced and perpetuated the identity of the self. We have an almost continual psychological experience. This is the part of the mind that is doing the asking. Who am I? Where am I? It is almost identical between each human. This is the water in the analogy we are developing. Over successive months and years, habit and behaviour carve a topographical channel through the mind, so that every day you are more likely to engage in certain behaviours and thoughts to which you are habituated. The Nile of your mind follows the established route. You ask yourself what you are going to do today. Who you are? What your beliefs and your aspirations are. How you are going to enact your volitional power today.

And now we come full circle. At the very beginning of this essay, we agreed that it would be ludicrous for a group of humans in the past to dictate our volitional choices in the present, thus removing any actual power we might have. But every day, we

allow us-in-the-past, to dictate the habituated behaviour of us-in-the-present. But what actual connection do we have to the us-in-the-past? We find ourselves with memories that were not constructed by the us-in-the-now. We are faced with the consequences of decisions that were not made by the us-in-the now. So in reality, we seemingly, with very little thought, allow the decisions of the past (of which we were not party to and not signatory of) to dictate how we-in-the-now behave. This is identity or the self. And it is obviously illusory. If we choose to say that those choices made in the past were made by us, and therefore we are obliged to carry them through into the future, I say that obligation is a choice and you are giving up power in the now, out of what, ancestor worship, self-past respect?

When your you-in-the-now, asks the question, "who am I?", the response he gets is akin to reading a book written by somebody in the past. You are Louie. Says the book. It may be true that the author of the book identifies as Louie, but do I <- whatever that might mean (and in reality the I is the conscious experience of the present) but do I have to continue to identify with that self if I do not want

to? Are there other ways of being?

Power

Life did not choose to be created. The universe did not choose to be created. Planets do not choose to orbit stars. Galaxies are born and die. They have no control over this process. Continents raise mountains that are eroded into the sand at the bottom of the sea. There is no volitional control involved in these processes. Power, in terms of volitional power, is seemingly rare. And I would hazard to argue that we human beings are the only things in the universe that we know that have such power.

A man finds himself in a valley. He cannot see into the distance, because all around him the mountains obscure his view. He is trapped. But unlike every other thing in the universe, the man has the power to raise himself out of the valley, to change his vantage and be in a different place. Everyday we find ourselves in the valley of the self. The identity that has been carved by successive cognitive conscious experiences that appears to dictate who and what we are. But as I say, this is illusory. Your past

experience is no more your own, can no more dictate your choices now in the present, than the caveman can choose your child's name. There is no self. Merely a transitory you-in-the-now experience that is forever being lost to the past. And that when the you-in-the-now asks the basic existential questions, it is answered by the past, not by itself. And since we have on the whole, agreed that the past cannot take away our volitional power, we must accept that our past identity is not us, and though we may use that identity in living, we can see that doing so is just part of the habituation.

The truly brave person. The truly powerful person, is not constrained by their past identity. Louie-in-the-past no longer exists. I was not party to his choices. And truly, if I find that identity an impediment to my present and perhaps future happiness, then why can I not be a different identity? The river cannot change its course by thought alone. But we can. And it cannot be a terrible thing that we have this power. Of course, actualising this power is a difficult thing (and the author of this essay does not claim to have fully divorced himself from the habit of the self). But step one must be: recognise the

truth.

Everything is pointless. The universe was not made for us. We are not made in god's image. There is no god. We were made by the random process of evolution. The self is illusory and is a construct that is sometimes adaptive and useful, but can also be detrimental to wellbeing. Show me a planet full of happy and fulfilled beings, for I see not one. Given these conclusions, is it really so difficult to understand that there cannot be any resolution? Any perfect way of being. There is no answer to the meaning of life, because there is no question. It merely is. Existence is absurd! But, we must live. Or at the very least, we live until we no longer exist. And if reality and the truth are of any importance whatsoever, then knowing the truth can allow us to recognise that we are a powerful being, even if the truth is not of a palatable nature. And even if that truth is, that everything we have believed in the past to be true, is in fact make-believe.

If you are unhappy, do you really have an excuse to not change things? To be a different person. To hold different values and aspire to different things? Of course happiness is preferable to misery, but can-

not be the meaning of life (for there is no meaning to life). Once we have divorced ourselves from all the delusion, then comes the process of rebuilding. A hard and difficult process for sure, but show me the other parts of the universe that can destroy themselves and build themselves back up again.

Annihilation will come to us all. Powerful and weak. Organic and non-organic. Wise man, greatest of all. Well done.