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Introduction

Meaning, in all its grandiosity as a concept, is far simpler than we as a collective would like to imagine it. In our everyday lives, meaning is inherent whether that be a goal we have to work towards, or a more broad goal; e.g the idea of religious ideals. No matter whom, or what exists, we all have a belief system, and in that system we find meaning; the meaning of life. One could believe that there is no meaning to life, yet this in of itself is still a belief system with the meaning that life is simply spontaneous chaos. Despite the fact that we all have differing ideas of what could be the meaning of meaning, along with what that entails for our society, and our own lives, how can we know? In works such as *Crime And Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, the idea that one who believes in nothing could be damaging to themselves or others emerges, and along side that the main question of this thesis; **“In The Search For Meaning Is The Truth Uncovered Madness Or Success?”** And yet despite our constant questioning and probing of said issue, we cannot yet reason the true answer, and yet I seek to find it.

The line of questioning and reasoning is yet very simple; What is Madness? What is Success? What separates the two? And finally what is the defining meaning of life between Madness and Success? The importance of this line of questioning is unstatable, as we are living and conscious beings who seek information as a simple way to cope with the nature of our own existence, and yet the final question's answer still eludes us; What is The Meaning of Life? To determine properly what the meaning of life is, one must determine if life has an inherent meaning at all, and from then on must question if there is meaning to life, then what would it be? The significance of the question cannot and shan't be underestimated, as to find the meaning of life is not only the ultimate challenge effacing all of conscious thought, but is the key to understanding our own purpose in an otherwise indifferent universe.

If we are to find our purpose, we will not be satisfied only at the societal level, but we would on a personal one, as to define the meaning of one's existence is the whole point of our lives in our current day, which is in fact the question of what to do with our lives, and with the time we feel is unlimited until we are completely out of it. The first step on the way to finding the meaning of life, is to determine first if it is indeed possible, what lies ahead, failure and madness, or the glory of success? Is it a question which can be answered? I believe so. In fact I believe the question's answer is far more simple than what one may originally have thought. And thus, to delve into the mystery of life, to uncover the secrets of what we as humans can do, is what this entire thesis is dedicated to.

That is to say, if the meaning of life can be solved, it must make reason within the confines of its solvent, and the meaning of life may be chaotic or non chaotic, in conformity of the differing values and sets of guidelines of which are to be stated, and of which are of great value in deciphering one of many takes on the meaning of life.

Part 1: Literature Review

Firstly, the question must be asked, and thus answered by others. The sheer fact that people have asked, and received meaningful answers about the topic should point to the fact that success is a common path for many, yet in truth we only ever hear the thoughts of the sane philosopher, not the one gone mad from the search. Perhaps they haven't dug in deep enough? Perhaps their notion of parablellum was shattered too early for them to wonder and go on further.

Firstly, we can look at the works of Niccolo Machiavelli. In his work, *"The Prince"* we are given insight into one of his core beliefs, that it is ideal to be both feared and loved, yet if both are not achievable then he would rather be feared. This along with many of his other works point to the notion that perhaps the idea Machiavelli came to was that humanity in of itself is so selfish and narcissistic that we as people attempt to find meaning in something abstract which cannot be absorbed through meaning. If you take an apple, one perfect in taste, texture, appearance, and everything you would desire about an apple, it would be quite narcissistic for you to think that this apple's perfection was in service specifically to you, that the meaning of the apple is to become your perfect little lunch. Machiavelli would have you believe that this apple would have and did have nothing whatsoever to do with you, it was simply your will exerted upon the apple which caused its nature to become known.

One may look upon the meaning of life in a similar way, and assume that life is in of itself beautiful, and yet we as humanity take it that it is beautiful in service of us. Once more, on this larger scale Machiavelli may argue that life in replacement of the apple is beautiful not as a construct for ourselves, and perhaps was never even meant to be beautiful, and only is due to our observation that it is beautiful. In which the notion of beauty is inherently questioned, as if it is due to our subjective experience which makes something beautiful, there cannot be any true beauty, thus something can not be perfect in service to us.

However, one may also argue that because we uniquely see something as beautiful, and thus something is perfect for our own senses, then perhaps it was perfectly crafted for us. Yet this is also and could be in a Machiavellian belief system, considered narcissistic. The notion that our sense of beauty is completely unique from others is perhaps also a farce. Take the question from a unique perspective, if you see an old friend in a far away place you've visited then you may think to yourself what a coincidence it is, however you never stop by everyone whom you do not know, and think about what a coincidence running into them is not. This points to an inherent bias on the part of humanity, along with our narcissism in the eyes of Machiavelli, thus pointing to his ideas as potentially true.

However, I may argue that the perception of something's beauty is enough, that that idea of which something was made perfect for you could perhaps not be hubris, but joy. A sense of joy towards life would reflect that even if we as humans are narcissistic creatures, and if life was not engineered for us, than we may still be allowed to interpret it as something made so perfect, and so beautiful in our own eyes that we view and hold life's meaning as something greater than the question of our own perception, if life is to exist at all and we in fact do, even if it is a fluke, or we are not unique, our circumstances in relativism to ourselves is. Thus in some form of sense, we are special, not to the extent that we are alone, or that life is fine tuned for us, but in the fact that we were fine tuned for life. Life won't be shaped around our needs, we were shaped around life. We found meaning in life by survival, yet have come no closer to an answer. The only thing saying humanity is narcissistic for believing life's meaning is of our concern, we may instead take that we are and have been fine tuned to be able to understand, which despite our larger irrelevance makes us in some way capable of understanding the ineffable.

Secondly, we can look at the views of the great Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche had the belief system of both perspectivism and nihilism. In which he argues two things, firstly that there is no inherent meaning to life for any one person, as all people see the world differently, thus none can truly see the point of life. If we were to argue for our beliefs, Nietzsche's response would be quick and instantly crippling, and that response would be today's modern equivalent of "that's just your opinion." And he would be correct, if no universal truth can be truly defined, then all truths; even his own could be put into

contention. This centers around the idea that the universe is uncertain chaos, in which nothing has meaning as nothing has significance. This plays into his own belief of nihilism, as if no one's beliefs are incorrect, then no one's beliefs are correct either, thus nothing claiming to be the solvent to life's mysteries can be advocated for.

If nothing matters, then the meaning of life is as such, random chaos. If life is simply random chaos, then there would be no meaning in life, as if all people have differing beliefs, then the waters become so muddy, no one's beliefs are sacred anymore. And if there is no meaning to life, then our answer is clear, failure or madness lies in the search. If no answer exists, then attempting to find said answer would lead to failure, in which madness lies. In too many great or small failures, the heart of man can be swayed, into a belief in nothing. The only way to shield yourself from the idea of nihilism is either will a stoicism and the willpower to remain faithful to one's own beliefs, or else one will fall into the pit of the nothing belief. To believe in nothing isn't to say if the jar is half empty, or half full, but it is to throw the jar away and curse its name, as it never mattered if the jar was full or not.

To Nietzsche the idea of searching for meaning within something he deemed inherently chaotic, or inherently meaningless would lead to madness. However, one could counter the belief in nihilism with the notion that if life is indeed purposeless, and the relevant notion, "Cogito Ergo Sum" holds true, than it proves that life does indeed exist, and to what purpose can be determined for asking why may or why did non organic matter (presumably) convert into fluid living tissue, and if so than what differentiates something which is conscious from something that is not? If one can only see and reveal their own thoughts fully to themselves, if the only man I can be sure of is alive is I, and if the theory "Cogito Ergo Sum"'s true mistranslation is indeed as such, than the phrase would not translate to "I think therefore I am" but instead "I am thinking therefore I am" thus pointing to the notion that memory inherently has no core value to us, and thus we can only be sure of our own existence via our current doubt and questioning of whether or not we indeed do exist.

To say life exists and the prime derivative of life is to continue living, but a rock cannot hope to attempt and preserve itself, then why did life emerge if not because of the fact that non organic matter was

formed into cells, then why and how do we determine if something lives or not. If a computer can question its own existence and derive an answer, then is it fair to determine that that computer is indeed conscious? How is consciousness defined in the sense of at what point is an organism living, and at what point is that same organism conscious. If matter cannot be created or destroyed, then how could it evolve, if matter cannot be created or destroyed then what would matter have had to fear? What would the purpose for its own evolution be, if not its own preexistence. This points to the fact that simple continuation of life is not the end goal, then there must be another; an inherent purpose as to why life exists. To say life does indeed have value and meaning due to the fact that our reason for the genetic compulsion to populate life, both in reproduction and self protection, could be a secondary goal in order to ensure that life itself could continue not for its own sake, or for the sake of large scale population, but the creation of more life is not the ultimate goal, but the means to an end. If this is indeed true, and life is a vessel for a purpose greater than itself, and our prime derivative has been lost to us in exchange for the secondary derivative to keep alive and reproduce, than the sheer existence of life, and the fact that things can indeed be alive points to the fact that at least at some point, life must have had a purpose. And if we indeed did have a purpose at one point, the meaning of life may lie in finding that purpose yet again.

One may argue that the fact that life eliminates itself is key for concern, as if all life is programmed to find the same purpose, then why eliminate fellow workers? This could also explain natural selection, as if only the smartest and strongest of what life itself has to offer would be capable of solving such a complex problem, then it would be in the best interest of life to attempt and force change, to force evolution. Thus through this lens we can view the elimination of fellow life to be for the greater cause; that being unknown, yet still a cause. If the meaning of life lies in the cause, or if the meaning of life could be put as simply as determining the cause and not fulfilling it, than this proves the works of nihilism incorrect on a large life scale; as if life as a unit does have meaning nihilism on that rung falls apart, yet we can still say our own lives have or lack meaning.

Thirdly, we can look at the works of Fyodor Dostoevsky. In his works we can find a set of ideals so extreme we can call them nihilism taken even further. Nihilism is the idea that nothing matters, and

that life has no meaning. However, in Dostoevsky's mind, why even ask? His idea is if the meaning of life is so convoluted and inverted to the point where some resort to the maddening belief in which nothing has meaning or value, then he would and does argue that the asking of a question as preposterous to him as the meaning of life is simply foolish. If you concern yourself with only practical matters, then what is stopping you from simply admitting defeat, a grand defeat not in which you flip the chessboard like nihilism, but instead you never played the game in the first place. If nihilism states that no problem exists to the question of life's meaning, Dostoevsky would say that there was never any question to have been asked.

If what was mentioned before is indeed true, and there is an inherent purpose or end goal to life, then Dostoevsky simply puts in the idea that why look? If the only path ahead is the madness of the endless search for something so beyond our comprehension as a larger goal of life, something that cannot be learned simply through one piece of a puzzle, as even with the entire set it would be hard to complete, yet from one piece? Dostoevsky says that to even bother solving the puzzle when inherently you will either be wrong, or you will never be right, why attempt to solve it? If it's a waste of time, why attempt? Well my goal is not to attempt, but to attempt and decipher if it is indeed even worth attempting. Posed to this question, Dostoevsky's answer is no. The question to him is not worth answering, if the answer you will derive is guaranteed to be false.

If nihilism poses the idea of nothing being of matter, then Dostoevsky poses the idea that even that notion of nothing mattering doesn't matter. If that indeed is true, then one could pose a stoicism to the world which faces and presents a man such as his main character in "*Crime and Punishment*", that nothing in the world, existential or not, wouldn't be of any value, nor of any negative value. If Nitsche argues that nothing matters, and thus it should be cared about that nothing matters, and Machiavelli believes if there is a meaning to life, than it is simply too abstract for us to understand, and that must be true, it is an ultimatum, either life has no purpose, or it does and we simply aren't intelligent enough or informed enough to be able to understand its meaning, Dostoevsky says why ask? If you are either to get

an unpleasant answer, or the answer that you can't understand, then why ask your question? If failure is guaranteed, why try?

Dostoevsky was quite the spiritual man, as one of his core philosophies was that a man can only attain true happiness through the bond of body and soul, as such he would have posed the same question others ask, which is the meaning of life, and yet would have come to the conclusion which was put forth before, why try? In looking at many other works by Dostoevsky, one could take from it the idea that if this is such a question as to be completely absurd, then why attempt to put forth an answer?

One could pose the counter that if life is indeed so absurd as to not find an answer at all, then the goal of looking should not be to find, but should be to understand. If we currently don't have the full puzzle, then instead of looking for the answer, look for the missing pieces. This is as to taking an algebraic problem in which one solves for both x and the variables to get there, exemplified in $L = M(U) + P(K)$, in which we know one piece or a few pieces (P) and multiply that by the amount known, then we are missing two key factors, being M (or the solvent other equivalent pieces), thus L is impossible to find, and thus the puzzle remains unsolved. In this case the point is conceded, the search for the meaning of life straight out of the gate is foolish, yet there is not but despair, as one can find meaning in searching for the undiscovered pieces ($M((U)))$.

You could call this a sort of moral absurdism, where if no moral code exists for one reason or another, one more easy way to patch it would simply be the idea that if Dostoevsky believes that the issue is not worth solving, yet you still attempt, then despite the fact that thousands if not hundreds of thousands, if not millions of beliefs exist on the meaning of life, there is still a chance you could be correct. We've preestablished that there exists an ultimatum, that being either there is no meaning to life, or the meaning to life is beyond human comprehension, thus there exists two possible limited answers. Therefore, if there are only two answers then one could pick either and have a fairly high 50% chance of being correct. Even to say the ladder of the two options, and then invoke Dostoevsky's idea that it would be too complicated to research, you could simply go about it using the formula $L = M(U) + P(K)$. This entails the fact that no matter what, you can claim that there both is an answer to the meaning of life, and

it is halfway solvable with enough time and effort; and even if you in particular are not the one to solve it, your research could very well translate into someone else figuring out the key.

Yet another source you could look to would be that of the famous Søren Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard believed in the philosophy bordering the most on the answer of madness in this discussion; that being true, unfiltered absurdism. This is essentially the belief that the universe itself is ineffable, and thus is both difficult if not impossible to completely understand with human perspective as the base.

Kierkegaard believed wholeheartedly in this ideology, yet it still differs from the beliefs of Dostoevsky.

The main difference resides in the fact that Dostoevsky's interpretation of the meaning of life was that it existed, or perhaps it didn't, but either way the truth would and will be too much for humanity in its current form to bear. However Kierkegaard's beliefs differ in the fact that in his mind, there were definitive truths to the universe, along with his belief that they could presumably be researched, or were at least worth thinking about, whilst Dostoevsky believed that the truths of the universe were inherently not worth studying, at least not yet.

Kierkegaard's absurdism focuses on the mixture of both Dostoevsky's and Machiavelli's beliefs, combining the potentially ineffable nature of the universe with the narcissistic tendencies of humanity to believe that we are capable of understanding something most likely far far beyond our reach. This cacophony of beliefs leads to the rather interesting thought of Kierkegaard's struggle when it came to the nature of the universe, as the belief in the ineffable leads inevitably to madness. That is not to say Kierkegaard was mad, but was to agree with Dostoevsky in the sense that the path to madness is in attempting to study the ineffable.

To mix this idea of Kierkegaard's and one so familiar in the art of madness as Lovecraft, though not a philosopher, he is perhaps one of the best authors of madness possible, as he himself unlike Kierkegaard was mad. Lovecraft both wrote of and believed in the nature of the ineffable so deeply, that eventually he was consumed by it. "Stare into the abyss too long, and it begins to stare back" is a quote that does indeed deeply show this side of Lovecraft and Kierkegaard's way of thinking.

One could not counter the ineffable, and thus the belief that the nature of the meaning of life is not able to be understood is both a logical and most likely accurate assumption, wherein we can ask the question if this discussion even should continue, as madness must clearly be the correct answer? No, the ineffable is something which we as humans cannot understand, and more likely than not, a level headed person could toil away at the ineffable for a long enough time that they become mad in the sense of rage, and not insanity. The fact of the matter is that Lovecraft went mad due to his genetic and environmental stimulus causing him to develop grand hallucinations. In the case of Kierkegaard, he very well could be correct, yet to say this soon that madness is most certainly the answer would go against nearly all examples we currently have of people who have looked into the meaning of life. All of the great minds spoken about thus far have not gone mad, save for Lovecraft, and in his case his madness was not even caused by his research into the meaning of life, which is to say more often than not, we discover and answer, or leave defeated rather than to go mad. More often than all, people quit, less often than that is the idea of people coming to an answer.

One could find the meaning of human life perhaps more close to home upon the study of the works of Aristotle. He believed in the simple delightful and quite noble belief system that the meaning of life was in the practice of virtue. This is not only immaculate in nature, touching on the more moral side of humanity, but on our very meaning as people. Now to argue that the meaning of life is so simple could be called foolish, and yet many others believe iterations of this very same notion. Aristotle would argue to any other philosopher that the meaning of life could simply be in the service of one's fellow man.

To believe not in a system which values a fundamental truth, but one so abstract as virtue is both a path to an answer which you would like, but perhaps not the answer we seek. Virtue, in the sense of general life, doesn't exist. It's a human construct, as to look in the plant or animal kingdom, virtue isn't something instinctual, at least not for the sake of doing good for good's sake; simply put it would be more akin to doing good for an inherent benefit to keep the life of one's species intact. Therefore, one may take the conclusion that virtue is not a necessity, nor is it a core piece of life itself, however on the human scale in particular, it is reasonable to agree with Aristotle in some forms. To say that our lives in the human

scale are dedicated towards the progression of our own species, we need a variety of differing systems of belief, a core one being that of virtue. Now to say that virtue is the key or the purpose of life itself is as absurd as saying the purpose of eating is to enjoy food, as on a unique and well off human scale, yes this would be the goal of said subject, yet on a larger scale this practice falls apart. We need to think inclusively on the meaning of life, and differentiate conscious life from non conscious life.

We can say that consciousness is subjective, as René Descartes puts it; “cogito ergo sum”, or “I think therefore I am”. However this can be translated in a more literal and more correct way, not taking the individual pieces, but the whole part. This would be, “I am currently thinking, thus I can infer that I currently do exist as a conscious being.” Now we can interpret this as so: we are only and can only be sure of consciousness when we put our own consciousness to doubt, as to doubt if you are conscious, something must be doing the doubting. This entails the fact that there is in practice some level of conscious thought, which we cannot be certain if anyone else but ourselves possesses. Therefore, it is a safer assumption to say that the study of all of life in particular is more likely than not a more accurate representation of life’s meaning than a subjective questionnaire, of which we cannot be sure is correct unless constantly thinking about the questions entailed.

Therefore we can conclude that virtue is a piece of the puzzle, showing on the side of consciousness on our societal level, to be virtuous to one’s fellow man is exemplary, perhaps due to the fact that virtue allows more humans, and thus more potentially conscious creatures to be brought into thought. Thus, supporting my running theory of life existing for a reason larger than we could never even hope to imagine.

Finally, I will look at the works of the brilliant Plato. In his various philosophical musings, we can find that he believed life’s purpose was the acquisition of knowledge. In which is derived his ultimate goal for human life, which is that the more knowledge whether it be subjective or objective is non relevant, as the gross consumption of raw information was what Plato sought to gather. Now this would also lean into the madness side of the final answer, as to gather infinite information in one human mind is simply impossible, and thus would be akin to trying to drink from a glass which refills completely every

second, by taking one sip every day. You won't even be scratching the surface, as even this thesis is an expression of a brand new iteration and interpretation of knowledge, completely separate from all works before, and all works after it in the very literal sense, thus culminating in the fact that Plato's goal was perhaps not to know everything, but could be more accurately interpreted from his Allegory of the Cave.

Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave to put most simply is the expression that a group of people live in a dark cave for all their lives for generations, and on the walls of the cave occasionally dance shadows formed by the outside world. One man actually goes to the outside world and realizes that the whole reality he had lived under the guidance of his shadows was a falsehood, and thus he goes back to alert his peers, who promptly execute him for daring to present such blasphemous ideas in their minds.

This brushes perfectly on our own nature, being that our perspectives are limited, both in a mathematical and philosophical sense, that being we have both limited range of sense, and of dimension, but also have limited range of thought. This culminates in the very real possibility that we are currently living within the cave; that we are living falsehoods beyond even that of worshipping shadows on a wall. Thus Plato's hunger for knowledge would be explained by his work, as in his ultimate goal was to achieve complete and objective views on the world, upon which he would be the one out of the cave first, and thus would be the one to be able to realize the full truth beyond perspective. However even that put, there would be more and more perspectives still remaining locked to us currently, and thus we can assume that if the meaning of life were to lie in the full and objective truth, you could come to the conclusion that we may very well never reach said truth, and thus at the end of the journey lies madness.

Despite this, you could make an argument akin to the beliefs of many religions such as Christianity, of which I will neither be endorsing, nor criticizing in this thesis. Simply put, on a purely philosophical level, the struggle is the purpose of life, to struggle and bear the weight of the world beautifully in the eyes of a "creator" is the end goal of life, and to put it less kindly one could say this is simply suffering for the entertainment of a lord, slavery. Therefore this line of thinking could be true, and more likely so false, yet the ethical notion that we toil for no reason but the sake of toil, no matter how well spoken, is simply a form of servitude for no purpose other than the amusement of another.

Part 2: Methodology

To completely understand the question at hand, we must first ask what is meant by both the question, and the answer I hope to find along my research. To begin, madness. Madness in this sense isn't an anger, nor is it delusion, nor is it the simple notion derived from the mass media describing the painfully simple thing which is insanity. In this context, madness refers to a never ending struggle with no end, a feedback loop leading into nothing being derived from all work; an ouroboros. Purely in the fashion that an answer cannot be derived, and purely off of the fact that the question being asked has been asked so many times, and answered so many times is fact enough that it is both relevant, and difficult to

solve. If there can only be one correct meaning of life, then one would assume most philosophers to be incorrect. The odds that we have even found the answer in the first place is incredibly slim, and is a part of the madness loop. The question I have posed is essentially “In the search for meaning, can a reasonable answer be found, or will it be a never ending search?” Even in the Nietzschean idea that there is no meaning to life, this is still a comprehensive answer, and thus is both acceptable and feeds into the idea of success.

In this context, success is supposed to entail the fact that an answer is found; the meaning of life is able to be concluded. This may seem far less likely than madness, yet we can look at a variety of different viewpoints as technically successful, as aforementioned the ideas of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Plato. We can assume that the greater meaning either lies in the absurd, and thus is a comprehensible answer in between madness and success, or we can point to the other two, both also showing the effects of success. To admit, the most likely answer to be true is that the meaning of life is ineffable, yet we can still attempt to peel back the veil, and successfully glimpse at the meaning of life.

Now we can move on to methodology. To begin, one must develop a fundamental conceptual idea of other philosophers, and then develop an impartial opinion, which granted is quite the task in of itself. The research’s design is simple, we must first define the terms used and the terms sought after, and then we must conclude if these answers can be used in the context of our great question. The goal is first to limit the number of accurate philosophies, which has been done, and then we must move forward, and simply attempt to define what life is inherently, what consciousness does to the facet of life itself, and then move on to finally answering our question.

The second step after defining our key terms is to determine what exactly we are looking for, in this case being not the meaning of life, but if given enough time, the meaning of life could potentially be discovered. Now this is quite the conundrum, as life inherently is more complicated than we could imagine, thus coming the third step; research of key figures in philosophy and finding commonly agreed upon terms and beliefs; for example the fact that humanity is most likely insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe, or that the meaning of life can be comprehended even in the sense that Kierkegaard puts it being that the universe is absurd. This would allow us to determine how accurate our preexisting

assumptions are in relation to what is planned, and allows unbiased data to come across our collective board of information.

We can assume a few key things, firstly that the meaning of life is comprehensible at a base level, as even the notion that it is incomprehensible is a comprehension, and thus this question should have an understandable answer. We can also assume that a majority of conclusions made about the total and final picture of the meaning of life are incorrect, both due to the fact that the sheer number of final conclusions is so high, mixed with the idea that there can be, and that there is only one correct answer, one could assume as aforementioned; that a majority of beliefs are incorrect. We can infer that most data hinged on the experience of conscious beings is highly biased if simply just based off of the fact that we are conscious, but also based off of the fact that to be an opinionated being is to inherently be biased towards one's own beliefs. Everyone would prefer themselves to be correct when faced with ideological opposition, especially when the matter of pride is at stake, and no matter what we can do about it, this idea will never fade away.

We can assume many things, yet those will be listed in the next segment; now being the time for data collection methods. Now this thesis is styled not as one philosophical, but one which is rooted in the scientific method. This is due to the shortcomings of both human interpretation in general, along with our tendency to more easily trust the authority of science, even when an ideology secretly hides behind it. So to pose this thesis as scientific better prepares the reader for the impartial nature of said thesis. To collect the data of something objectively subjective to the point of complete opinion and interpretation in the form of something such as philosophy allows the means of collection to also be objective. In this sense, "data" is not referring to something as objective as, for example; the effect of gravity in comparison to mass. There is no definitive set of data one could pull from, thus in the nature of an attempt at being impartial, we simply look at the universal truths we know to be more or less certain, (Descartes's theory being a solid example), thus pulling meaning from said facts. The next step in the collection process is more or less simpler, being the notion that we should find common mediums between differing philosophical texts whilst exerting negative logical fallacies, those being ideas that we can reason to be

true, such as the fact that there is a meaning to life, as if there wasn't then the meaning would be no meaning, and thus would prove to have been an idea in substitution for a meaning.

We can assume based off of said fact that if there is a meaning to life, then it is definitive as if everyone held an individual purpose, than the meaning of life would be to find your individual purpose, and thus we can reasonably exert this information into five categories of potential answers: Individual Purpose, Lack of Purpose, Greater Servitude, Collective Purpose, or Innate Purpose. These will be further covered in the final results section. But in simple terms, the meaning of life is either determined by an individual, there is no meaning to life, life exists in the service of something; (whether that be an idea or a being is not necessary to be determined), life exists in the service of more life, or life exists for a pre set purpose of which is unknown.

The participants in said research include myself, (William Lee Keefe) and various philosopher's works, in which meaning has been divined. This thesis is not to undermine or state ill of the works or ideas of others in search of meaning, simply my own thoughts based off of their own. Now a majority of these fine intellectual minds are now deceased, and yet I would still like to give them the credence and credit of which they most certainly deserve.

Finally the most simple procedures I have used to collect this data include but are not limited to the following steps; Reading a work, Analyzing said work, Determining the meaning or implications of said work, determining its relevance to the topic of the meaning of life, and finally determining the legitimacy of the beliefs of said work. This process along the course of my research has been used over twenty-six times for the analysis of the following works:

The Prince - Niccolo Machiavelli

Discourses on Livy - Niccolo Machiavelli

The Art Of War - Niccolo Machiavelli

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, A Book for All - Friedrich Nietzsche

Crime and Punishment - Fyodor Dostoevsky

The Idiot - Fyodor Dostoevsky

The Brothers Karamazov - Fyodor Dostoevsky

The Adolescent - Fyodor Dostoevsky

Fear and Trembling - Søren Kierkegaard

Either/Or - Søren Kierkegaard

Principles of Philosophy - René Descartes

Meditations on First Philosophy - René Descartes

Discourse on the Method - René Descartes

Allegory of the Cave - Plato

Part 3: Results

In the final set of results, as aforementioned I came to a set of five possible categories on the meaning of life, branching off of the main two. To set the stage for them, first context must be added. The main two refer to the fact that there is or there isn't a meaning of life, which is the two core potential principles in this discord, and thus if one were to guess they would be correct 50% of the time. Thus we look at the question being posed, the figure of madness vs success. In nearly all of these categories lies madness, and thus one could assume that madness is the most likely answer, yet to read and then to see what possibilities lie before you could very well be an eye opening experience in determining the truth of which you hold dear.

This question is not to pose any threat of any kind to anyone's current beliefs, and is simply to encourage more powerful and more comprehensively deep thought; an experiment of one's mind both to

test their own intellectual stance on their own beliefs, but also to re enforce their beliefs if they deem them to be true, or perhaps to discourage beliefs of which they now find incorrect or preposterous now that it is thought about.

To add some context, as someone of yet a still developing mind, and thus a developing view upon the world, it would be arrogant if not simply foolish for one of my current age to attempt a shot at the fine target which is the meaning of life, and thus is why my question is close but not on the topic of the meaning of life, however if the meaning of life is narrowed down to me as of this work's development, that is of no harm and is of no loss to anyone. Therefore, the determining of these categories is simply to be a thought experiment, in order to finance the minds of people who are at the time of reading ready to discuss a topic so difficult, so profound, and yet so alluring. And that being said, the results found are not to be taken as gospel, and are simply the theory of the potential universal five.

Firstly we must consider the main of two original arguments, that being the potential of which there is not a meaning to life, and thus life has no inherent purpose. This could take the form of something like one must create their own meaning, which ties in to another of the five, but it does not necessarily guarantee that life has no purpose, but that there is not a seeable inherent purpose casual and across all things. The idea that there is not an inherent meaning to life is not a new idea, and is perhaps more likely in the sense of pure statistics with equal chances in comparison to the other potential answers. This falls in line with the idea of nihilism, in which the question of if life was even for a purpose is brought into question. It prays on the idea that if there is not a meaning in the face of the nullifying expanse which is our inevitable end, then why bother in the attempt to fight it? If there exists nothing worth fighting for, then why fight at all, it would simply be thrashing around in the ocean when you know drowning is the only way out. There exists no other practical solution than that of to give up all hope in an attempt to make peace with the devaluation which exists in the practical world of nihilism.

This out of the five poses an extremely important question, that of if nothing does matter then why would life exist in the first place, and if there is a reason then why does consciousness exist? Consciousness on the fundamental level provides no benefit to creatures whilst taking up a massive amount of comprehensive storage in our brains, we could have simply been more machine like, akin to intelligent ants, yet we didn't evolve in that way. To quickly define consciousness in this context, I believe to be conscious is to be able to perceive, understand, and connect. This is all very simple in speech, but in practice it is quite difficult. For example, something like a computer can perceive, and it can do so quite easily as to perceive is simply to take in information. Computers can also connect relevant points of data, computers can relevantly make an assessment that one thing and another are related via the use of common variables. However, the key of consciousness is to understand.

To pose a quick thought experiment, if someone is blind, and yet is the most intelligent individual to have ever lived in the history of humanity, and listens to hundreds if not thousands of pieces of literature all in the attempt to understand the color red, they may be able to understand it, perhaps even picture it. The question is if they could see red just by a description, and if no matter how detailed the description, can you understand things properly without experiencing them? Could you understand what it's like to fall one hundred stories down without doing so, or at least having an experience so similar it could pass for it? I think the answer to this question is no, to completely understand all the ideas surrounding a thing is not to experience a thing in of itself, so thus a computer lacks this one thing which we may call a soul, yet I would call the ability to understand, which is to say the ability to have been alive. One may argue that a computer understands perfectly, yet if you are to ask anything to describe the color red, we could not. We could describe how red looks in contrast to other things, but we could not generate the idea of red itself, we only know red because we've seen the purest essence of the color.

That being said, what is the evolutionary advantage of being able to understand? Going back to nihilism, if we have no purpose for being alive, and thus no purpose for being conscious, why are we? What's the point of being conscious of one's own existence and yet it does not matter at all. Thus I conclude that life both due to the sheer incomplete nature and the flawed nature of life, I can say that life

does definitively have a meaning, not that life has no meaning. This is also based not on a puzzle piece, but upon the absence of one. That is, if life has no meaning, then how and why did life begin? Life began on the single celled level, and basically operates like a small factory, that is to be said, did a random combination of particles slam together to create life? Most likely this is the case, which will reflect on the final answer I come up with in this thesis.

In the idea of nihilism, life has no purpose, and thus it should be counted that life is also not particularly special, and no one facet of life is special. It simmers down to the idea that all of life is inherently random, and thus is lacking in the department of value. If this is the case, on a philosophical level, a rock might have the same value as a human being. To think like this I believe would both be an incorrect summary of the total donation of which is life, but is also potentially harmful to all of society at large. If the idea is that no one thing matters more or less than another one thing, then that would open up the door to many a moral dilemma. If there is no seen problem of us stepping on stones, or shooting a gun at a target, this pathway of thought could be brought to say that if a person has as much value as the thing being stepped on or shot, why not inflict those actions harmless as they may be to inanimate things, yet would be detrimental to a living organism? The idea is not to limit an idea, but to think about the fact that the most glaring flaw in the idea of nihilism itself is within the fact that if there goes no moral code for anything, then there must be no purpose for a distinction of systems in which things are valued, and this is why you'll never see a true nihilist.

If the application of nihilism exists in the real world as hedonism, or the sense of hedonism mixed in with stoicism, in the idea that nothing matters, you may ask a nihilist why he may continue to live. You could spit upon his shoe, and when he becomes angered you may question why he has if it never mattered in the first place. You could destroy his car or his house, and that is not to say I condone these actions, but that is to say that if you treat him in such a way, then why must he expect to be shown common courtesy if he may not believe it to be necessary or in fact proper at all.

This points to the hypocritical nature of the nihilistic idea, and in which if one is to argue against this notion, and if that person is a nihilist, then why are you arguing if my opinion, and the people reading

this thesis, and your ideals don't matter? This segment is not to say nihilism in the sense that life doesn't matter is not true, but this is to say that there is no true nihilist, and thus all works regarding nihilism must be taken with a grain of salt. However this applies to nearly all of the five universal possibilities, as you won't see every religious Christian consciously thinking about God every second. This is to say, that if there is no true nihilist, and we cannot truly know something without glancing at its purest form, then we could ask ourselves if on a humanitarian level if we are ready, or willing, or even capable of comprehending the idea that we have no meaning in the face of the vast and expansive abyss.

To conclude on the idea of nihilistic philosophies in which life has no inherent purpose, and thus is both the most and least likely of the five. This is due to the fact that life either does or does not have a meaning, and yet in terms of probability in practice, it seems far more likely than not that life does have a meaning in some form. Nihilism touches on the feeling of meaninglessness many people feel, and thus is becoming more and more reflective of our modern day society. That is to say, to conclude in a final bout of mortal comprehension, to be a nihilist is to enjoy solace in knowing good or bad, you did it for yourself, and thus is the ultimate Machiavellian paradox. If it is narcissistic to believe that we have a purpose if we have the same odds of not having one than indeed having one, it is also narcissistic in a more conventional sense to believe that nothing matters, as this will lead one to value only themselves.

In a grand finale of the idea that is the core belief that the universe has no purpose, it is the most and least likely of the two options. I however feel, it leans more towards the latter simply out of both the fact that I as a human admit my bias towards the meaning of my own existence, and thus I should say I would both think and prefer to cast aside this idea in its entirety, and thus concludes my findings on the idea that life has no meaning. And thus, if this is to be true, then the answer to our question would be success. This is a definitive answer, and has no deeper meaning. It is plain and simple, life has no meaning.

Secondly, life has an individual purpose. This essentially entails and builds off of the idea that life has no definitive purpose, and thus is more of a subject in the final thought than the others. This is due to the fact that within this idea, the notion that every single individual living being has their own purpose, in which their life is built up to achieving. Whether or not one can choose their purpose, or whether it is predetermined is up to interpretation, however the final idea has to branch off of two definitive must's; being that life has no universal meaning, and also that meaning can be found on the individual scale. These are two relatively large assumptions, and we'll discuss the former as of now. To explain the idea that individual meaning is all that is important one must simply look at the philosophical argument of one's own perception. The only person whom you can apply cogito ergo sum to is yourself, thus the only one you know to truly be conscious is yourself, thus one could make an argument that the individual is all which matters in an uncertain world. This leads to the fact that if life can only be assured on a personal level, why take the risk of serving something which for all the information you have, could be a false thing to worship. Thus the argument is put into place that the only correct statement for what you want to be serving is serving for one's own means, thus assuring that one's life is spent in care of whatever that life would seek to do, and is not conflicted with nor is it to be messed with in any significant way by something one could assume to be "fake" in nature.

Therefore, if the only thing that ultimately has meaning other than you, and thus is the assumption that the universe at large has no greater meaning, then you would be justified in serving no one but yourself. This leads into the idea of pursuing one's own ideals, as if no ideals or morals ultimately matter, then why not pursue the ones which make you happy most. This is an evolved form, and a solvent for nihilism. In this, you could step upon a nihilist's shoe, and he could say that it impacts him in a negative way as he has decided it conflicts with whatever he wants to do, which is ultimately life's greater purpose to him.

If life has no meaning, then whatever you give meaning automatically has more meaning than something of which you never did. This is due to the fact that if each part of life is a net zero, worth nothing, then one could make the claim that because the only thing that dictates value would be one's own decision of what has value in the first place. Now this is an argument based off of the first one, that being that there is no inherent meaning to life; however one could also build upon the notion that there is an inherent meaning to life, and that is simply to chase your own goals. This one relates more to fiction and is less funded than the former, however it is still worth thinking about.

If the inherent meaning to life is indeed to chase your own meaning, then that in of itself serves to the idea that there is no universal meaning to life. This builds off of every off strand philosophy which clings onto humanity, such as our notions of virtue, kindness, and many religions could also follow the same coordinates as this. Thus this final answer pulls off of a more satchel or general like sense, as there could be infinitely many different meanings to life, as there would be one for every person.

The biggest criticism you could say, is that this is essentially nihilism in a more well packaged form, as it is essentially the idea that there is no meaning to life, but to find your own. Thus this is pseudo-contradictory in the sense that you are saying that there is/are meaning(s) to life, yet also claim by proxy that life has no universal meaning? This is in the sense of reason, a logical phallusy. Therefore, this ideology is flawed in the sense that it has to be wrong to be right, or it has to fall into the absurd in order to figure itself out.

In truth, a majority of people who claim individual or “special” meanings to life fall under this category. This means that if life is truly special in the sense that everyone has a unique goal, then no goal is truly unique, as if all goals are relative, then your goal to change the world, or cause happiness could never be achieved as they are both subjective, and can only persist dependent on others. If you believe that the meaning of life lies within the person, then any goal not completely separate from all other people could be said to not have been their own goal, and this also brings up the idea of nature vs nurture; how much do our lives impact our views on goals, ambitions, etc. If someone was born in a family which supported them vs if they were born in a family which resented them, which would be more likely to be ambitious enough to rise to the top of the world? Or would it simply be the nature of that person to attain success? This is also subjective, as if you asked a billionaire if they were destined to be this person who they are, or asked them if they were simply a product of their experience, you would be correct in the probable assumption that most would agree they had achieved this of their own merit.

That is to say, if our own goals are the meaning of life, yet inherently speaking we have no goals, does this not simply project nihilism with a pretty wrapping? Is this not a patchist attempt to convert the threatening advance of nihilism into a calming, yet fake assumption that we actually possess free will? The notion that we possess free will undetermined by the wants or needs of others is another philosophical question in of itself! Free will is what I would describe as the making of a choice of your own volition, not being forced to, but to coerce into making the decision is allowed. For example, if one were to hold a pistol to someone's head when asking them to pick up a stone, this would not be an indicator of free will, as the person in this situation may have the choice to simply die, yet I feel free will is also dictated based off of the fact that you do not feel as if you have no other option.

To throw yet another example at the problem, if a man were struggling on his rent, and needed ten dollars to pay it off, and suddenly he discovers ten dollars he had saved away for a situation just like this. Now it could be in the sake of free will that this man could indeed destroy his ten dollars, but in this case he would feel as if he had no other option than to use it. On the other end of the spectrum away from the negative, if a wealthy man is offered one million dollars with no risk, no take backs, nothing all simply

from basic car insurance, it could be argued it is within his free will to have not accepted, but most likely this man would feel as if he had no choice but to take the offer.

To say free will is definitively this or that could boil down to this idea; Free will is a choice made without the person making the choice feeling as if they have no choice (positive or negative, this would simply not be free will), whilst being their final decision, influenced by others or not, so long as they have crafted the decision themselves, and have not felt as if they only had one correct option to choose from.

However, one could make the argument on this larger scale that one's religion, or one's personality could culminate in their sight that there is only one correct option, thus this not being free will on the sake of nurture, and thus all free will is exerted upon also based off of nurture, and predetermined by nature as well. This accepts the fact that free will is a term so subjective, that we must again consult logical theory.

There are two potential pathways, either there is free will, or there is no free will, there is no in between no matter how much we may say so, we either are inherently attuned to one belief, or we are not. We have pre established that influence still constitutes free will, for example if you had to steal from a friend, and did not need the money, but your whole life had been conditioned to steal from friends, then this would still be an exertion upon you "free will", however making your case perhaps more sympathetic than other cases of thievery.

Therefore, if one's nurture leads to the clashing of their ideals, then we can assume that free will does exist, in the form of which one in the moment can make their own rational decisions. It would be absurd to take someone with no reference point into life, and ask them their opinions on the international crisis. This would well corroborate the fact that free will may exist in this form, no matter how tainted it may be.

Going back onto our original point of discussion, if we all have unique goals, how unique can we say they are? To begin, a lot of people in the grand scheme of things have the same goal funded by nature, that being that of self preservation and hedonism. The brain is inherently tuned not to think about tomorrow, but to focus all its energy on the now. Thus we can say that if many people have their own common goals, funded by the fact that pre will can and is easily promoted by the influence of other

people, then we can assume that if every idea is original, every idea had its own meaning to its own user, funded by the notion that free will can exist, assuming a figure akin to god does not exist pulling and forcing us to think or act in a certain way.

To conclude, the idea that life's meaning is in finding your purpose, or finding your ultimate goal is not completely unfounded, despite it building off of nihilism. However, for this ideology to be true, we must first admit nihilism to be true, therefore these two theories must exist together as two sides of a coin.

Thirdly we have one of the most popular, and one of if not the most controversial opinions held in my findings; the idea that the purpose of life is in servitude to a greater being. Now many if not all religions vaguely or directly commit to this idea, that there is an idea or figure or idea that exists beyond human comprehension and thus in lies or purpose for life; the servitude under said being.

Now firstly we must explain my course of reason. If there is a being watching over us, no matter how benevolent, yet in its holy text states that we must serve it, or its ideals, then this may clash with our free will as preestablished. One could argue that it could be our free will to serve, however if it is true like many religions (Christianity is a popular example) that we are created in the image of said being, then we are predisposed to have a feeling of purpose of said being, and thus may feel as if we have no choice but to serve, or come up with a reason why this call to servitude is invalid. To give an example, if you suddenly met with a man who could do anything you could imagine, and could smite you in an instant, no matter how benevolent you may view him to be, if he asked you to serve him under the promise of a great life (and thus contributing to the main idea that we are predisposed to the desire to life), we would say that there is no free will in this given equation, at least not on the side of submission.

This leads into the question of if servitude brings a better life, is it worth it? Well to answer the question briefly, it depends on one's notions towards life. Once more, if it is indeed your free will which allows you to choose not to follow the path laid before you, yet is not if you decide to indeed follow the path, then one could say that if one is happy but a slave to something other than their free will, then their free will becomes non existent; corrupted.

Another example under our paradox of free will goes as such; if you continue to serve this hypothetically infinitely powerful man, yet you are tempted to be lead away from him, yet he threatens you with fire and brimstone, then one may say, “but sir, I have no choice other than to submit!” And he would be right. It is your choice not to submit, and suffer the consequences, but it is not your choice to submit, as if you felt the other option was indeed viable, then you would not have submitted. If you fancied being killed over picking up the stone as aforementioned, that is your choice. However if you picked up the stone, you never really considered the option of not doing so, now have you?

To present a thought experiment, you sit in a room, silent and dark. A contract sits before you, offering not to burn you alive if you sign to be a slave for all of your life. A man holding a flamethrower sits behind you, waiting until you either sign, or until the sun rises above the room in an hour. You are presented with two choices, at first a perfect example of free will. You could sign and be a slave, or you could not and burn for it. However, based on our definition of free will, which is that you cannot feel as if you have one choice, or else it would not be free will, and simply be an obvious decision. It’s like asking a poor man if he would rather have ten cents or ten dollars, the choice is so obvious it does not even have to be made. [Elisa Filevich 1,3,*](#), [Simone Kühn 2,3](#), [Patrick Haggard 1](#) states in his research that humans actually make decisions subconsciously seconds before the conscious desire to commit to a decision. In this case with the contract, if you signed then this is not actually a definite example of free will, as if you valued your life enough to sign the paper, then you would not have seen the not signing of the paper to have been a viable option. However if you did not sign, and yet valued your life, the choice was not obvious to you, thus being a real choice between multiple outcomes, thus is an exertion of free will.

This is to say, that free will is circumstantial, and thus in the grand scheme of things, free will does not exist on the life scale if you are a servant to something you view as so much higher than you that you wouldn’t dare to question it; and any semblance of goodness, or any sense of benevolence of which your “master” may have presented can simply be chalked up to an overextended Stockholm Syndrome. That is to say, the nature of the notion that one’s life is to be in service to a persona or something akin to

the sort is to say in all essential qualms, to be a slave to that which commands you. If the free will to oppose servitude does not exist, is this not slavery?

Then once more, we must consider that the likeness of the thing withheld in greater servitude is something other than a living thing. Greater servitude out of the five universal possibilities is perhaps the most vague, as greater servitude is the coin flipped side to life having no purpose, as if life has a purpose then purpose itself has the meaning of meaning, then you could say that life's meaning is between the first and the third possibilities.

In this next example, we question the fact that a set of ideals could be the thing worshiped. If a set of ideals has no consciousness to a reasonable assumption, then we must assume as well that the reason for our worship of any set of ideals must also be confined to the idea of which these ideals are fundamental and unquestionable, and to claim this, one must be insane. Perhaps the most unequivocally undeniably subjective thing to ever exist in spoken or written discussion is the topic of ideals, and not just in the more conventional scenes such as politics or policy, but in topics such as ethics themselves. This is not to say a universal set of ideals does not exist, nor that it cannot exist, but it is to say that with the amount of ideals we have at our disposal currently, that one can definitively be correct, especially with how human ethics in specificity are so subject to change. If you were to look at the ideals on good and evil from one thousand years ago, or even one hundred years ago, you would claim that the difference is quite the stark one indeed.

That is to say, even the idea that good and evil fundamentally exist to begin with is absurd as a notion. If the meaning to life was not confined only to conscious life, but to all life, then what would one make of the animal kingdom? We see there that survival of the fittest reigns supreme, but our current societies are focused on accommodating for those less fortunate, and thus brings us to two sets of opposing ideals. So one can be correct, but not the other, and past that more likely than not, both are incorrect. Us as a society have so many differing ideas and ideals on the subject of ethics that to establish any singular ethical set as to be morally superior than any other, or to go as far as to say that there is a definitive set of ethics prominent in the universe to begin with is also an absurd set of assumptions.

This leads in to the fact that the greater servitude notion is perhaps one of the least probable in terms of logical thought, as if there is or if there is not a meaning to life, then the many leaps and logical hurdles one must use in order to facilitate this idea is an absurd number in of itself. First is the somewhat reasonable idea that we can either have a purpose or we cannot, and thus this idea stems on these ten key assumptions, and hundreds of thousands of smaller discrepancies. This list shall bring the key assumptions in order from most believable to least.

Life must have meaning > we cannot yet understand said meaning > something must understand said meaning, or make sense of said meaning > this thing has dominion over us due to that fact > that thing must be focused into something simple > this thing can be either an idea or a being > this thing is omnibenevolent and its laws apply to all facets of nature > the ideas expressed by said thing must be the fundamental truth of the universe > there is no other truth than this.

The main idea of this chart; life has a meaning, this meaning is dictated to something so much better than we are that it is both allowed to dictate how we should live, but also dictate how we should think.

The idea that some force or being is akin to this chart is both a terrifying yet also absurd notion, as once more on a scientific standpoint this makes no sense. If free will exists, then this would not be beneficiary to this being, and if our lives were in servitude to said being, then all the flaws we have both to ourselves and to our society, nature, etc. all can be said to be the fault of an incompetent master. However, to affirm one's belief in a figure such as this as a whole, a majority of people who do indeed believe in or believe a section of the main idea (greater servitude), the most common argument seen is the one "it is ineffable". That entire argument boils down to you cannot understand it, and thus it should not be criticized. However, this is a bold and untrue claim built upon one disadvantage of reason.

It is said that there are two people whom you should never argue with if you value victory, and those are the people who know so many leaps and bounds more than you that your loss is guaranteed, and then there are those people who simply refuse to be wrong. This presents a larger logical fallacy to us, that if something does exist, then there will be proof of it, but if it is hard to prove, that proof will not come

easily. However, if it were to not exist, we would never find any proof for or against it so long as it either conforms to the laws of the universe, or if it is stated to exist outside of them, both paths lead to and easy out for the believer, that being that we have no proof on the contrary to their belief. This is an ironclad defense in their mind, and in reality it comes close. If we cannot prove the existence of a god or something akin to a god, then by default we can also never disprove it. Therefore, if this concept both exists as unprovable and provably unprovable, then the believer could claim we simply haven't looked hard enough yet.

To put it into perspective, if I were to tell you that on the planet Jupiter for one second that it turned purple, but it would be unseeable to machine or man, then you would say it to be absurd. However, if I make the claim, and there is no proof to the claim, but you cannot also disprove that I saw Jupiter purple for one second with no one else seeing it, you could make the claim that what I saw was real. The only thing disproving what I had said would be common sense, or principle, however this does not in any way disprove that I saw Jupiter as purple for one second.

Thus, we come to a logical block in which I cannot reasonably disprove the logical soundness of greater servitude, but a supporter of the belief could also not reasonably convince me that greater servitude is the meaning of life. Therefore, stalemate.

Despite this, I conclude that greater servitude from a scientific standpoint is both unlikely, and if it is indeed the truth, it would take the highest amount of logical jumps in reasoning to accomplish.

Fourth, we have perhaps one of, if not the most compelling argument in my eyes, that being Collective Purpose, along with its brother, Innate Purpose. The idea essentially entails that as a collective society we serve a greater purpose, and this idea is probably the most likely, as all but one of the aforementioned ideas actually serve at the behest of this core idea. (The one not connecting being Individual Purpose) The idea serves the fact that as a collective if there is a meaning to life, then it should be served together, conceding to the Nihilistic belief that there is no purpose to the world. This entails that even in the concept of Nihilism, this essentially points to the fact that if there is no purpose to life, then we have successfully created a society which has no meaning, in which meaning is individual, thus circular reasoning states there could be one or two interpretations which do not concede to the idea which we have a collective purpose.

On the other side of things is innate purpose, which is connected to more or less every other potential meaning of life, other than perhaps no purpose. You could argue that having no purpose is innate, however that would mean that the meaning being derived is that of your own interpretation, thus an innate purpose fits better with individual purpose. Innate purpose is also abstract in the sense that there is more or less always an innate purpose, even if there is none, then the purpose of which you select becomes that innate purpose, as then the meaning of life would be to find its own meaning; circular, but arguably the building set for a content life.

The most compelling argument in collective purpose can actually be found in the works of Machiavelli, in the sense that we all believe ourselves to be special; or that we all believe ourselves to have a purpose separate from all others. However, this argument is fundamentally flawed from any perspective which does not support an innate purpose, therefore things such as individual purpose, etc. Innate purpose however must be true, and therefore we can call a universal constant in this regard.

This reflects in the broad nature of the concept, as many things are commonly proposed, many philosophies hinge on a collective purpose, that being something which is also innate, which can also be a

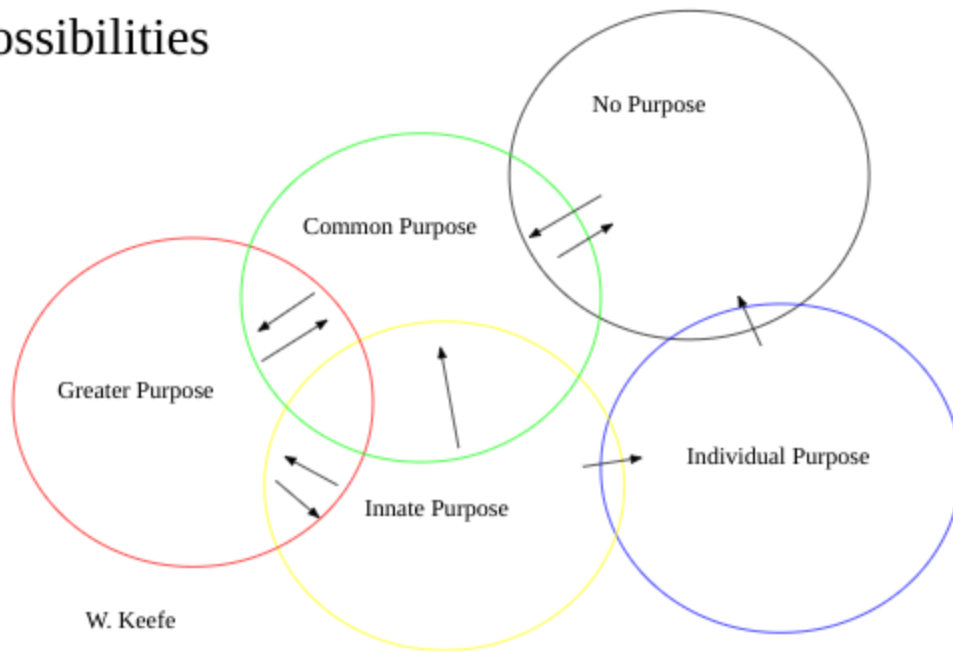
greater purpose. However, having no meaning also is common across all people if it is true, and thus this is also a common purpose. This means that some ideologies can co-exist, and some are more broad statements which can be attributed to another specific wavelength of thought. Take the most broad, Common Purpose, and the most restrictive, No Purpose. They both clearly state something, the universe has a common purpose for all beings, and the universe has no universal purpose at all. One of them has swaths of possibilities, and revolves around the fact that a meaning could, and most probably does exist, yet those who argue for it come into issue when the question of what exactly the proposed meaning is. However, on the negative side of things, nearly no other ideas than there being no meaning can fester, as if there is no universal meaning to life, then there is no universal meaning to life. It leads to interesting possibilities such as the idea that there can be individual purpose.

Simply because they directly oppose each other does not mean that they are not connected, as having no universal purpose is actually also a common purpose, that common purpose being nothing, therefore these ideals being presented can be connected.

The connections which will be shown in my diagram are not to represent any one truth, but to help and derive meaning from these constants. The five universal possibilities do not have to negate each other, nor do they have to contradict each other, in fact various of them co-exist in the sense that innate purpose must always be true, no purpose can apply to everything aside from greater purpose, etc.

Here is a diagram of the proposed connections between the universal five: (Page 33)

Common Connections Between Universal Possibilities



Now that the convoluted nature of the connections can be solved, and we have more or less cast aside individual purpose as an option, we can use common purpose as a leap off to explain these connections.

Firstly the most simple connections to make are from Greater Purpose, or the circle in red. It only connects to two other circles, and therefore only two connections need be explained.

Innate-Greater. The link between these two go both ways, which is to say if there is a greater purpose then it would also be innate, and similarly if there was an innate purpose then that would be greater, even if the greater concept being explored is simply the fact that the innate purpose of the universe is to find your own purpose. Greater purpose in this regard means meaning. And for something to be innate, it must have a meaning for being so.

Common-Greater. This one is slightly more subjective. If there is a common purpose throughout life, then this would be a greater purpose constant across all life. After this we can say that if there is a greater purpose to life than it would be a common purpose as well. Therefore we can claim a two way link between these as well.

Greater x Individual/No. Greater Purpose is hinged on “servitude” or service to an idea, a being, or whatever you may think it may be likely to be. This entails the fact that if there is a greater purpose to life than it would not be individual, as common and individual purposes ideologically collide to make untrue statements, which in turn contradict each other. Therefore there can neither be a connection between individual or no purpose.

Next we have a common purpose, which connects very well to many other possibilities.

Common-Greater has already been covered, so we move on to Common-Innate. For there to be a purpose which is engraved on our very hearts and minds, a purpose divined from nothing but pure law is to say that this purpose must also be a common one, or a purpose shared by the collective essence of life, therefore if a purpose is innate to a certain type of thing, then that thing would have a common purpose due to its purpose’s innate nature.

Common-No. Common purpose and no purpose despite what one may think, can actually come together. The idea essentially goes that having no purpose is also somewhat innate, simply in the opposite sense. (Which is why the two clash). We have the idea that there is no purpose to life, and if that can be represented by “0 purpose”, then that would be common across all life. This means if there is no meaning to life, then this would also be a common meaning, that is having no purpose universally is to say if no one has a meaning for their existence then all are equal forever.

Common x Individual. This is a fairly simple concept to grasp, if there is a universal common meaning to life, then there is a meaning consistent across all things. If the meaning however is unique across all things, it cannot be common. This means that the two cannot coexist, as they fundamentally oppose each other, thus no link.

Innate-Common and Innate-Greater have already been covered, thus we move on to Innate-Individual. The relationship of individual purpose is curious in the fact that if the meaning of life is not indeed common, and is instead interpreted by the individual, this could be a way of simply saying there is no meaning to life. However by adding meaning this expresses the independent question of if the meaning to life is altogether unimportant, as the meaning one finds in their own life should be the one which guides one's actions and behavior. Therefore if this is to be taken as true, this would also constitute an innate purpose, given to you by yourself, proving the link.

Innate x No purpose. Innate purpose is the idea that life as a common purpose has a set value of which is the meaning to life, however no purpose is to say that there simply is no value to life whatsoever. These two ideologically oppose each other in the sense that there cannot both be a meaning to life constant across all things which is inherent, as no meaning is not inherent. It is like trying to divide by zero, as if there never was a meaning to life, this would be common, but not innate. If a bag starts with zero apples in it, was this an inherent number of apples? If it started with two, or three, you would say this is an inherent number or value, but if there is none, then the concept of what was innate is now rendered meaningless.

Finally we have No purpose - Individual Purpose. These two can co-exist simply based off of the technicality that no universal meaning to life does not contradict, nor does it get in the way of one creating an individual meaning to life.

To conclude on this diagram, the connections both allot and allow for varied and unique combinations of different circumstances to provide connections in the sense that they all contribute to a larger meaning to life, thereby causing us to believe that life's meaning in the broader sense, can indeed be derived.

To conclude our results, I would say the least likely purposes are Individual and Greater, with us having either an innate/common purpose or no/common purpose, thereby leaving us no closer to the finish line than before. However if we simply take the logical steps and burdens of proof of each of these, we can see that N/C has to prove that life has no meaning, whilst I/C has to prove that life has meaning.

To derive meaning from something meaningless is far easier than to eliminate meaning from something that does have one.

If you were to look at a painting representing something even as basic as an apple, it would be the journey of a fool to attempt to dissuade people from believing that that piece had meaning, as no matter how basic, the idea that the painting has an apple on it, the meaning could be as simple as a representation of an apple, thus the burden of proof to find something which may have meaning does in fact not, is much more difficult than the other way around. If you were to take a pen for example, and write about how it represents the struggles of the modern day artist, in your own mind, you would be right, and to others who could not say, you could be right. Therefore, we can say based on the fact that “meaning” in of itself is inherently possessed by all things that do exert a positive or existing force on the world, therefore meaning is common to all things; so why not life?

Even in the escape of the notion that life may have no meaning, that meaning is simply altered to say there is no universal meaning to life, and instead to focus on the individual, thus the universal meaning to life is unique to each person, thus a meaning to life does exist, and we can conclude that is a meaning Common to all things, and Innate to all things. And within that, I believe the unfounded answer to the meaning of life is found; conquest.

Part 4: Interpretation

To interpret our results, and their consequential meanings is a challenge that must start by being faced from the larger angle of what the I/C idea would mean. Now, this at first may seem extremely intuitive, as most people most likely believe that life does in fact have a common and inherent purpose, however the implications of this doesn't bode well for the solvability of the problem. For example, in something based in religion, as there are so many differing opinions on what this common and innate purpose could be. This is perhaps the most vague, but also most likely, and therefore one may assume that a majority of people would have or have followed a similar pathway of thinking as I have. Therefore, how can we divine the true meaning of life out of all the facilities and lies spread about by the world itself? The idea that we in particular even mean anything is highly questionable at best, and a definitive "we don't matter" at worst.

This reflects on the fact that in the grand scheme of things, a majority of the possible outcomes we have found would be reflected in the I/C belief system, therefore can we really say we've gained any new knowledge about the universe other than something we could have already known based on instinct? Well not quite, as within the bounds of the I/C belief system, a special "meaning in meaning" can perhaps be found.

It seems slightly counter intuitive that there would be a purpose to life, and yet we wouldn't know it. It's like giving a machine a set of code for making silverware, and not telling it anything about itself, therefore to find what its purpose is, it must do three key things. Find a way to tell the purpose apart from all others, confirm the purpose, and finally act on said purpose.

This would mean that the meaning for life in humanity's case could be as simple as enacting stage one, and simply just finding out what the meaning of life is in the first place is perhaps one of the core aspects of the puzzle to begin with. Now, how would one such as the aforementioned silverware machine find its true meaning? Well it first must start by putting two and two together, firstly a meaning to life

suggests one of two things; greater servitude, or self/species preservation. This would mean that a “purpose” to life would have to be determined by two factors (in the second case), those being survival, and expansion. Across all facets of life, you can see territory, expansion. There is no true commune in the sense that there is always something owned by someone, or some group. Ownership. Life in of itself is inherently good at it, and from this angle, negative traits such as greed or hate could be viewed as positive if the contextual meaning of life is the survival and expansion of a species. This doesn’t rely on a creator figure either, because engraved on our DNA is the want to survive, and perpetuate the human race, same for every other living thing.

This also falls within the bounds of what we are good at, as what else are humans good at other than expanding? This hinges on the fact that the machine with the purpose of creating silverware, its talent lies in its creation of silverware, therefore we can assume humanities greatest strengths would help reveal its purpose. Our greatest conquests in history have been those conquests. Whether it be the advancement of civil rights, or technology, or the rediscovery of things thought lost. Humanity excelled at breaking new ground, and progressing its “territory” across any metric.

This means we can infer based on humanity's greatest strength to be conquest, and the mutual desire across all other animal species, e.g lions, birds, etc. that the meaning, if not one of or a key part of the meaning of life, would indeed be conquest.

To think about it on a deeper level, on an individual plane, what makes one “useful” to the world? Their impact left behind, or in other words, their conquests, or their failures. We remember those who have failed, as not to fail ourselves, and we remember those who have succeeded, as we may hope to imitate them. Following this pathway of logic, we can apply conquest to nearly any philosophy mentioned grounded in an innate common purpose. The meaning of life is in service to kindness and virtue? Well, to be more virtuous than another is a moral conquest. The meaning of life is the search for knowledge? That would be no other than a desire for intellectual conquest.

If a common variable is found between many related, but distant things, then may we not assume that the variable in question would prove a deeper truth between said things? If we take into account the

fact that the idea of conquest both follows along with any and all life; even plant life! A plant's life is to grow, and thus claim victory over the surrounding land, there we have it, the meaning of life is proven to be conquest, or akin to something of the like, to impose your will on the world in any facet possible is the ultimate victory, and the meaning of life lies in victory.

If one would like to be so contradictory as to claim otherwise, for example, "What of those who would willingly sacrifice their own victory for that of others?" The answer is simple. To sacrifice your own victory implies you want to, (as if you do not then the person would not be forfeiting their victory willingly), therefore if you want to do something, and you do it, that would be a personal victory. This means, on an even deeper level that individual purpose also meshes with the final result, as it is up to the individual to determine what kind of conquests they value more than any other, and which are worth nothing to them.

For example, I would far more like to achieve a philosophical, intellectual, or political victory than I would be to achieve a culinary one for example. If the broad objective is to win, and humans are generally "good" at winning, on a deeper level, what we individually are good at should be for the sake of victory.

It would make sense that every base desire we have is shoved to the forefront, as living in of itself is victory over death, and nearly no one likes to lose, however if they do, then that would be considered an emotional victory for themselves! Even those who remain completely impartial and uncaring by will, to make that decision is a decisive victory over one's self. As long as there's will to do something, and even if there is will to do nothing, as long as there is will at all, and thus as long as something exists entirely, their purpose is conquest, victory, sometimes even just the aversion of loss. It can be as simple as walking to your workplace and getting there a few minutes early, or as large as conquering an entire continent, either way the goal, or the enjoyment is of victory, and thus our actions are motivated by, or even completely controlled by our collective impulse to achieve victory.

Now what does this say about humanity? If we are all in seeking of victory, this would mean that Machiavelli is correct in the notion that humanity is selfish. Even those who decide to help people out of

the goodness of their hearts have a moral victory, something gained, a good deed done for the sake of the victory, nothing more, nothing less. This means on a subconscious level all we care about is fulfilling our desires to attain a victory as high up on the ladder as possible. Even something as dreadful as suicide could be viewed as a personal victory for the person, as if their goal was to avoid pain by death, this in of itself would be a loss to death, but a victory over life, and depending on their hierarchy of victories, this could indeed be a favorable outcome.

We've covered the how, and what, now for the why. Why would I assume that victory is the ultimate motivator for all of life? Simply put, there exist so many interpretations to life, as of now there is either not a meaning to life, or there is, and the most probable in my mind for the ladder lies its lot in with victory itself. If life has a meaning then that meaning is in the pursuit of victory, or the eversion of loss, or perhaps even both. This, both aligned with what we already know, makes no contradictions, has a somewhat low burden of proof, along with the fact that there is both evidence supporting it, and very little evidence in opposition to it. This culminates in an idea which I view to be solid to the point of being nearly indisputable, along with the fact that it even accommodates the philosophies of others.

What are the implications of victory being the whole driving force behind nearly everything we do? Well simply put, if our ultimate goal lies within receiving the ultimate form of satisfaction, and therefore the goal of life is to achieve the ultimate hedonistic control over our lives, then this would mean humanity is not simply greedy, but is completely driven by nothing else than its lust for victory, for conquest both over friend and foe, and in the end there really is no distinction, as what is the difference between a friend who would like to defeat you and an enemy who wishes for the same. This would not only mean that all relationships are for personal gain on some level, but would also mean that real relationships cannot be formed. This would be due to the fact that if someone is only influenced by their desire to achieve victory, and therefore a relationship which brings joy and satisfaction could be considered a victory, or seeing the happiness of others could be a victory, you are never doing things for the sake of others, but the sake of your own victory.

This poses the question to humanity itself, as this notion would prove us to also be quite self destructive, as this would entail the fact that if we all seek conquest over each other, then there can be no other point of reference made to determine a good relationship. By the terms of victory, the only truly healthy relationships would be those in which neither party truly cares about each other, and thus cannot be parasitic due to absence. This analogy would mean that symbiotic relationships don't exist, simply relationships between two different parasites, leeching off of each other, gunning for one another to achieve their own victory.

This impacts society quite poorly as one might imagine, as if no relationships hold value, or are indeed symbiotic in nature, what is love? What is companionship? What is all of it in the face of victory? If one is to enjoy love or companionship, then seeking actively a faucet in which to drink said things from would be parasitic, and thus unreal and devious. This would also bode the same for the notion that one could be inherently loving towards another, as it could simply be explained in this case that love is a feeling of victory over another person to the extent that they are encapsulated by you, and vice versa. Therefore the world is not filled with many, but only two types of people completely black and white. Those who are parasites and those who care nothing for the world. This would mean that the only true victors of the game at which we call ourselves and humanity, are those who connect to it the least. This leads into one of my more concrete thoughts on the matter, as if victory is the "end all be all" then what else can we possibly hope to gain from life?

Essentially the point being asked is if life is a massive catalog of games, and we are more or less guaranteed to lose more than we win, is this a worthy game to play? Is a game in which you are guaranteed to lose something which can be considered truly rewarding and fair, and if not why play the game in the first place? If the goal is victory across the board, then everyone loses in the end.

In the end the implications for humanity are grim. We would both all be considered selfish, aside from those who simply lack the life to have a want for anything. If we even care about anything in the slightest, then we would be on the same level as the other parasites. This is to say, if one were to announce that they hated to win, and thus hated victory, and then did not pursue any more winnings, then

that would be a personal victory and thus that person would have claimed victory over themselves. This means so long as a man is not one hundred percent impartial on every matter that there is to speak on, then they would be considered a similar parasite on others as anyone else.

Now we enter the question, is this what is best on humanity to not be a parasite? If to be non parasitic is to be completely emotionless and unwanting for anything, and yet also a complete husk of a person is a fate worse than death many might tell you. The sheer power of an image of someone with so little drive that a contradiction in humanity itself does not faze them would disturb anyone. This leads to the potential belief that that is not indeed the way in which we should go about living, and that to walk the world as a husk is worse than to walk the world as a hypocrite.

The options are quite grim indeed, between the ultimate piece of living trash to someone who cannot want for anything is a hard choice indeed. However we must look at the intricacies of humanity itself to determine what is right. If we as a people idolize those who have the virtue and kindness in order to officially claim the world as theirs, then we would be correct in assuming that is who most of us would want to end up being, and not a wantless fiend. This would mean that many would indeed be more content as a hypocrite than a fool.

Inherently we may also say that humans are hypocritical and self contradictory. In the sheer nature that we are even allowed to judge others completely separate from ourselves, not knowing anything about them other than the reference point we have of an idealized self image, that we cannot possibly hope to ever escape the clutches of being hypocritical in nature. If we as humans will forever be hypocritical, along with the sheer fact that by our moral standards, technically both those who do and those who don't follow the law of conquest indeed are bad people; it is to say the common thing which parents utter to their children, "no one is perfect". This is in almost every aspect true of morality, as there are no people who have no wants, as if they were dead, or would have died long ago, and thus based on that alone no one living can possibly be perfect.

In this sense, it would still be detrimental for society at large to foster the belief in a world in which there are no truly good people, as believing in something so seemingly preposterous is what has

probably lead modern day young adults to be on average more narcissistic and “morally incorrect” people than in previous years, even comparing to only two generations ago to Gen X, our lives have become so much more materialistic, not because of our goals changing, but the objective and definitions of our goals have become warped. We have always valued conquest above all else, but now materialism and the ravenous nature of modern day instant gratification has made IG even higher up the totem pole of the value of differing conquests, which for most normal people should go:

Conquest over death (continue living)

Conquest over pain (comfortable living)

Conquest over self (emotional stability)

Conquest over others (relationship norms)

Conquest over material (more broad things such as purchases or possessions)

However, due to the modern sense of materialism we have begun to move things differently in regards to the upper middle and upper classes especially. We now value a comfortable life over more or less anything, and then comes normal living, then material, self, and leaving relationships with others for last. This is problematic due to the fact that conquest over others does not simply include being better than one's peers, or befriending others and enjoying that, but simply kindness and courtesy to others is also part of the category.

The original pathway of things that are supposed to go are highly logical, as we instinctively value our lives and then a comfortable life, and then we make room for ourselves, then others, then material, but as of late we have begun to value material goods more than other people, ourselves, and sometimes even above our own lives in rare cases. More often than not people tie their material goods with their lives, with their personalities, with their relationships as well. This leads to our people as a whole becoming more and more reliant on conquest over material things which inherently have less value

to us than other people, yet we have warped our perspective to fit a narrative of justification for our poor behavior simply to spite ourselves into believing our heinous lie.

Back to the main point, if life's goal is to receive victories in whichever order you deem to be worth more or less, in this case we would all have shifted priority to the point of maddening hopelessness, from which no return can hope to be derived.

Therefore the goal is to win, and the game is the world, with the prize at stake being one's very soul. In which our deeper meaning has been exposed to a select few who attempt to manipulate the world to their advantage, and succeed in doing so by virtue of them being correct in their methodology. If the goal is to win, then the loser must be the rest of us who did not.

Part 5: Interpretation II

We shall assume that our previous conviction is completely and irrefutably correct, what could another interpretation of the world end up being? If the requirements are that it has to be Innate and common across all people, with a few extra details scattered throughout, what could another meaning to life be? I find it quite simple, the meaning of life could lie in our sheer will to survive, and to do so comfortably.

We can argue this due to one key factor, every victory we achieve is for our own happiness more or less, which the more you are happy the more you would be comfortable in life. The basis of survival theory is that one must seek out to live another day every day. And once this is put in a societal position where this is a somewhat trivial task, we are left with only one more inherent purpose, that being to make our lives as comfortable as possible. This explains the rapid growth in consumerism and depression, as the less we struggle to survive the less meaning our lives have, maybe not to struggle for some deity, however that is not completely out of the question either, but we struggle in the name of survival. However we have gotten to a point where this struggle; a key part in our life's meaning is taken, we have nothing to do but fill the endless gaping hole of base desires we have.

It's like waking up from a penthouse in New York, looking at your billion dollar bank account. Of course it's a nice thing to have regardless of circumstance, but if you were gifted these things, then they would all have far less weight and thus have far less value than if you had started and grown your own business to gaze upon the ultimate fruit of your labor. This is to say half the reward is to struggle for it, and if we no longer struggle for our main objective, our lives can feel empty with nothing left to fill the void. Technically this leaves room for a non inherent self driven purpose, thus this idea can fit nearly all spheres if thought about it hard enough.

That is to say one point can be proven on the side of survival theory, but we have yet another. If all common life and not just sentient life all share the same two base instincts to live and further their race, this may simply prove to the theory that self preservation is key to life. If the goal of life is to live, then once that has been reduced to something akin to a guaranteed win condition, life begins to lose its luster, explaining many many inherent problems we seem to face in the modern age, especially in first world countries. The depression rates for people who have difficult lives and are aware that their lives are difficult must be vastly lower than the amount of people who suffer yet know not that they suffer.

To take a fictional dictatorship for example in which all its citizens are suffering, yet they do not know that they are, or how they are suffering. Thus, if they have never known anything but suffering, and are unaware of the fact that suffering is not guaranteed to all of their lives, they will not be likely to

become depressed, based on the sheer fact that pain has become normal to them. This is also in the opposite effect, if someone has never known suffering, and is suddenly and ruthlessly plunged into it with no way out, they are far more likely to become depressed.

That is to say, our lives are governed by a need to survive, and if that need is taken away and given to us on a silver platter, many of us who would be happier if they had just known suffering would then be less happy without it. This is to say that the implications could actually point to the fact that some level of meaningful suffering is necessary to keep humans safe, and the key in this case is that the suffering is meaningful. If one is suffering to survive this would be far more “worth it” in their minds, than if they had been suffering from boredom.

The implications are less grim than that of conquest, as the truth of the matter lies not in complete and utter absolution in the sea of one’s own self satisfaction, but in the order of first self and then all. This leads to a less destructive way of going about the world, as not everyone is a selfish monster out to take every small and insignificant victory you may hope to attain, but instead points to the idea that all humans simply try their best to live, to keep living, and to do so comfortably. However this is also partly contradictory, as the “comfortable” life and the “hedonistic” life have been warped to the point of irrevocable similarity. They have been molded and blended to the point where you could look at any relevant American, see that they have a good life and want more, and thus the new version of the American Dream has turned from a comfortable life to a gluttonous life.

I disagree with the common statement, “weak people create hard times, hard times create strong people, strong people create easy times, easy times create weak people”, but there is some truth to it in the fact that if life continues to become more and more relaxed with less and less threat of death or harm to anybody, we quickly take not simply our own lives for granted, but many other significant things. If one were to think about today’s youth vs. the youth of our grandparents, today’s youth grows up with some of the most powerful technology to ever come out of the world at their disposal, whilst the older generation grew up off of something quite different, in the matter of which I have no personal anecdote in.

The point is that if times continue to get easier, and progress grows even more exponentially than even the breakneck pace we're headed at right now, the people could have trouble adapting. They already are, seen in the levels of societally induced depression, not the medical disease but the feeling, as currently depression is largely overrepresented, as it is less people with chemical imbalances as it is people with no purpose nor any real meaning to their lives, as if the meaning was survival and that has become trivial, then what is to say about the people who would or could have valued the struggle?

To add another thought experiment, imagine a game such as chess, you are a master at your craft, and the opponent of a lifetime appears before you. The greatest chess player of all time puts his opening to play, you get ready to lose, or to win. Your skill is unquestionable, and you are ready for the dual of a lifetime. Then he loses the game in four moves to a simple scholar's mate.

What would be going through your mind? Disappointment? Resentment? Or ultimately a sense of purposelessness, as you have beaten the greatest, but if it was that simple, that easy, was the accomplishment warranted, or was it simply a product of the game being artificially easier for you? Let us say the chess master in this case was hit in the head right before his match, and now has a coma. Would this information negatively impact you even more? You were not more clever, more ingenious, more determined, you were simply lucky to have played the game against that person at that time.

To apply this back to life, no one today has been able to truly face the difficult master which is death, or at least few have been able to. That is not to say modern advancements are negative, on the contrary in fact. However this is to say that the purpose of life which is simply its continuation has lost nearly if not all of its meaning due to the fact that we are simply going too fast with no break to stop, and no way to cope with the G forces. We are making progress to the point at which it is evolving too much faster than we are, thus causing some of us to be taken aback, or in other words put off balance. This all culminates in the fact that this growth in technology is not simply multiplicative, but it is exponential. According to [this article](#) by Phys.Org, one day we might even see an A.I win a Nobel Prize, and at that matter there are over one hundred currently active "A.I Scientists" working actively and presumably well in the field. That is to say that in today's day and age eventually we'll create technology advanced enough

to create more advanced technology, and so on and so forth. This leads to the exponential rise in the amount of progress our species could be making in the future, as perhaps one day a Nobel Prize worthy invention becomes available each and every day.

To put this in more human terms, every day we could experience life changing phenomena, the likes of which we have never thought possible. We could literally do anything, as if we do in fact create things this grand every day, eventually more and more people will give up on simply trying to adapt, children will learn new things every day alongside their teachers, the world will chaotically grow like a cancer, until eventually we self-destruct. A key symptom of depression is the feeling of purposelessness, or a sense of nihilism. These are all justified and make more psychological sense if the meaning of life was simply survival, as if you're a worker your entire life, working on one project which another worker finishes in just one day, would you not gain a sense of meaninglessness or hopelessness? That is to say modern depression may not exactly be a symptom of an incurable disease, but a disease caused by our inherent lack of meaning. A disease caused by our cancerous growth, unimpeded by the world.

Another point of potential evidence towards survival being the meaning to life, we can look at history, along with modern day isolated countries. In all of history the main goal of people has been to live, has it not? We have conquered, we have pillaged, we have done many things not directly related or necessary for survival, but in the sense of comfort we seek another meaning to life via artificial means. That is to say, we attempt to garner meaning from material things, and we attempt to achieve happiness from surface level things, but this could all be in the fact that we live, and thus we have all we need, so we can move on to what we want. This could explain higher levels of dissatisfaction with the wealthy, as if you have a lot but not everything, one would see this as a Sisyphean task, in which one is destined to fail. The desire to do anything as well as live makes living by proxy seem less of a goal and more of a bare minimum, yet throughout history and in modern day 3rd world countries, we can see that many people

never get the opportunity nor do they get very far in living at all. Our lifespans have been lengthened, our killers killed, all to the point where one is no longer pondering if they will live to see another day, but what luxury can be afforded another day. We've shifted our sight from the ship to the sail, in this sense.

To look closer at actual people from these places and or times, we can see that many rates of depression either don't exist, or are low. This could simply be based on underrepresentation, which could very much be the case, however we can also see that these people may not have had the chance to contemplate the depth of their lives, as instead they worry about their lives continuing at all. This could be unrelated to the larger idea of survival being the meaning to life, but it is surely strong evidence to support the fact that the nature of human survival and rates of dissatisfaction amongst the population are largely connected.

Following the implications that the meaning of life is in service to the continuation of one's own life, we can still say humans are selfish, yet not to the degree of being constant narcissists, but in the sense that when push comes to shove, we all look out for ourselves, or at least those whom we care about the most, leading into the idea that we could perhaps have no deeper meaning in our relationships can cause distress to some, or that we have no purpose other than to continue living. Some could take it as an offense to their life, and others could take it to be a relief, however in either case the end result does not change. In the grand scheme of things, I would say the ideas of Nietzsche truly come out on top here, as nihilism points to no DEEPER meaning to life, no meaning inherent and no purpose to life outside of anything we may artificially deem it to be. Whilst the meaning of life being nothing and the meaning of life being survival are inherently differing concepts, their end results remain the same, we are left with our lives all being equal, having amounted to nothing, our actions going both unrewarded and unpunished.

To conclude, to say that the meaning of life is simply to survive does in fact discount many things in relation to the nature of an actual purpose, it does somewhat "fit" with the narrative of life we humans have conjured up. If our meaning in life is not to live, or at least if living is not a key part in it, then we would be self destructive to the point of constant suicide, which I say we are not. This culminates in the

fact that life itself is a principle based on survival, and competition for the survival of oneself and one's race.

Part 6: True Decision, What Does It Mean?

To say either idea is truly more correct than the other is a fool's job to be attended to, and yet we sit here attempting to ask the question, and to answer our main question. To say as such, we have to fully summarize each idea, then going forward present leftover holes in each theory, and then attempt to divine meaning from one or the other. Finally, in our final conclusions we will answer the thesis question; "can the meaning of life reasonably be achieved or even found?"

Survival Theory states that the meaning of life is in service to the survival of one's self and their race as a whole. This is an inherent and common meaning constant across all living things. The main points of argument for said beliefs hinge on three ideas, 1) The natural world is shifting from survival

being challenging, 2) Due to this people are becoming depressed without meaning 3) above all else humans desire to survive, and then on another level upward desire a comfortable survival. The burden of proof here is to determine if survival is really valued over everything else. This culminates to conclude that humanity is purely animalistic and base rooted in nature, as we can only ever focus on survival, and if survival becomes trivial we slip into madness.

Conquest Theory states that the meaning of life is in service to one's compulsion to victory/conquest. This is an inherent and common meaning constant across all living things. The main points for argument hinge on four ideas, 1) Humans are inherently selfish beings, 2) Humans value victories more than anything else, 3) Humans can change/alter what different things mean in terms of value to them, 4) Victory is and has always been subjective. The burden of proof here lies a bit deeper, hinged on the facts that A.) Humanity must be selfish, and B.) Humanity values conquest in all forms to be the purest and greatest meaning to life. This culminates to conclude that humanity is purely selfish, and the entire world and all of its nature is in service to constant and complete victory.

There are a few notable gaps in both theories, however they are nearly in the same quantity and consistency of both depth and detriment.

Survival Theory's biggest problems are as follows: 1.) People have been known to kill themselves or sacrifice themselves, thus not putting their own lives first. 2.) Not everyone is materialistic/depressed 3.) In highly religious/Theocratic communities materialism is highly stigmatized, and survival is still quite easy to come by (Vatican in particular comes to mind), yet they remain both not depressed, and not materialistic.

1. The taking of one's own life to begin, has been linked to true and real destructive neural connections happening within one's brain itself. It can be stated that the brain simply ceases to see the value of itself, and decides to self destruct, causing a taking of one's own life to be its first level of priority.

1. Counter. You could make the argument that a majority of the people who take their own lives do so due to the fact that they believe the world would be a better place without them, thus self sacrifice for the good of a higher authority being society.
2. Not everybody in the modern world is materialistic or depressed. To say the number of people who fit into the example category of living somewhat well in a first world country with disposable income is to say that having depression is somewhat of a luxury, due to the fact that meeting these requirements for most common groups to have depression indicates that having depression is a sign of having a decent standing in the world, or perfect mediocrity. To say that everyone should be depressed is a foolish statement due to the fact that many people have their own purpose in life, as you won't see/hear of too many people being in favor that the world is completely devoid of meaning, therefore survival theory stands as a basis for the meaning of life, in which some people have opted to replace with their own world ideals.
3. People in well off countries governed via a theocratic system are having lower to no signs of reported depression. This could indicate that if this problem is only occurring in areas such as the United States then it could be a problem with capitalism, not the meaning of life. I would say that one's interpretation to the meaning of life matters just as much as the actual and factual meaning of life, this could be due to the fact that in theocracies, moral law and the imagination of the meaning of life are dictated by a god, and thus given a religious fervor or purpose to enhance one's faith, as is proven that if someone is highly religious and highly moral with the same values and the same level of wealth as an average citizen may tend to be happier than someone reporting their sense of meaninglessness, which is not to say that religion leads to happiness, but is to say belief in a greater purpose could lead to you forming another internal state in which your mind may function.

In my eyes the biggest problems with survival theory leads into how it is relevant to have a meaning of life rendered obsolete, along with the fact that this meaning to life uses circular reasoning; if life exists its purpose is to continue existing. This is to say there may as well not be a meaning to life, as if

existence is trivialized we may as well all believe in nothing. The implications on the fact that life has no meaning strings past even the idea of widespread depression, but also spreads to the idea that if people have nothing to believe in, what would be the point in anything anymore, as if the betterment of our specie's happiness is but a secondary goal, would this be considered arbitrary at best, or perhaps even meaningless itself at worst.

That is to say, in a world in which we believe our purpose is something inherently done and done easily by most people considered average in today's modern society, would this not mean that this path of thinking would be destructive? If the meaning of life is supposed to tell people how to live, and then simply telling them that the way to live is to keep living, is like giving a small child a pen and paper and telling him to use them as a pen and paper. These instructions have many interpretations, many different possibilities, and yet the child is still bound by the instructions. He is still bound to use them as pen and paper, and thus is confined to do something easy which he may have already done if not told, thus sparking a desire not to want to use the pen as a pen and the paper as paper. The problem in survival theory lies in what makes it so compelling; its simplicity. The sheer fact that it is so open to interpretation and so flexible as to fit a majority or perhaps any narrative is both cause for consideration and rejection. Conquest Theory's biggest flaw(s) are as follows, 1.) It hinges completely on the idea that free will must exist, and that we are selfish in how we use it.

1. To argue in favor of Conquest Theory, free will must exist in some form, or at least desire must truly exist. This may seem like a preposterous notion, as of course desire exists, and I would have to say for the sake of this argument that it is unequivocally existent. This has to be the case as conquest theory hinges on the fact that A.) Our meaning in life must derive from our need to victory, and B.) that our need to victory can both be changeable and determinate on the person, which requires an inner valuation of differing values all on an equal field of value. To argue against Conquest Theory, we would have to say that the will to do anything is purely fabricated on our will to live, and to have a more comfortable life, or that comfort ensures life in a more

guaranteed way. This entails the fact that only one of these two ideals must be present, only one can reign as the real meaning to life.

The biggest strengths of each theory boil down to their open to interpretation nature, and their nature to be able to be flexible. Survival theory essentially boils down a potentially complex topic in the meaning of life, and simplifies it into something as easy to digest as the meaning of life is to live. This leaves no room for interpretation, and no room for misunderstanding of ideas. All other meanings to life are subgenres we've created, simply to fill the void left from our ever increasing ability to survive. The biggest strengths of Conquest Theory are the opposite, instead of the non flexible and definite shape of ST, CT is very much reliant on one fact which can be interpreted in almost any way imaginable. The idea is relevant to the fact that if the will to do anything exists, CT could or most likely would be correct. This ends in the loop that either it is or is not the right meaning to life, but most certainly is a big part of life. This could prove key to finding our final results. A final answer would be purely a matter of opinion, and thus my own answer would be irrelevant.

However, a guide to aid those who would like to choose, I have deemed to be necessary. The factors boil down to a few key factors. Firstly, if one is more prone to nihilistic totalitarianism, which is to say nothing at all matters, neither will have meaning. However, those exhibiting more pessimistic traits may view survival theory as the correct option. Those who are either extremely narcissistic or extremely logical would most likely deem Conquest Theory to be the more reasonable thing to believe in, as if the will to desire exists in any measure, which probably does then Conquest Theory is at least more plausible.

Now what does this mean, if Conquest Theory is more likely than not the option of which more people would choose? This would entail that a vast majority to all humanity is extremely selfish, and driven only by the need to satisfy one's need to win. This means only those who can best determine what people value most can truly gain success, which in today's business world is largely accurate. Ambition they say is the flame of which the world is slowly and warmly kept, yet is also a raging fire which could

burn it down; a true double edged sword indeed. It is not simply the ambition to conquest which would drive one's actions, but also the ambition to avoid defeat. If victory is the most profitable outcome, then by proxy a defeat would be the most devastating loss. This would explain why humans become so much more emotional upon a loss, or feel wronged upon a loss.

To conclude this segment, if Conquest Theory is indeed the correct metric for measuring humanity in its entirety in regards to its nature of morality and inner value system, we are all self indulgent and prideful beings, propelled only by a drive to exert our wills upon the world and upon others, destroying other sets of ideals, or claiming moral victory over them, and the forfronting of our own ideals as the morally, ethically, technically, etc. set of ideals. This means that any and all interactions with others were simply for their personal gain, or as a transaction. This means everyone would be in some sense, "our to get you", and that all people are malevolent in nature.

Part 7: Conclusion

To wrap up the whole thesis, we must list what we were attempting to search for, and determine the answer.

1. Discover what the most reasonable line of reasoning is for a universal selection of a greater truth.
2. Discover what values could reside within such information.
3. Discover if that value makes sense, or if continued investigation will lead to insanity.
4. Discover if the value is reasonable, the likelihood of said value being appropriate in the context of the meaning of life.

1. The most reasonable line of thought leads us to the conclusion of a purpose system, in which there are five main categories (with subcategories) linked and shared across one another. This is the most reasonable line of thought, as the core principles of each cover most if not all theories relevant to the meaning of life, making sense in their themes, making multiple interpretations true, and taking inspiration from many credible sources. This line of thinking would be the most broad to begin with, as only the general values of the categories are explained, in section 3.

This leads us to the general conclusion of the following five possibilities: Greater Purpose, Collective/Common Purpose, Individual Purpose, Innate Purpose, and No Purpose. The final results are gathered into being a Common Innate Purpose, or No/Individual Purpose, with Greater purpose serving under the C/I category. This leads to one of the answers being very simple, being there is no meaning to life, and nothing for us to do but determine our own paths. C/I suggests that a purpose (either across all “conscious” or all life in general) exists, and is innately given across all of said categories. For the sake of continued argument, C/I was chosen to move forward.

2. Many pre-existing values live within this category, as it is perhaps the most common, and also perhaps the most likely category which the meaning of life resides in, other than us having no purpose at all. Despite its vague nature, I posited two theories which would solve various problems and dilemmas in our society, those two being Conquest and Survival Theory. Conquest Theory states that everything in one’s life is simply in desire to inflict one’s own will upon the world, thus Conquering parts of it in the manner of which they see fit. Survival Theory states that the meaning of life is found purely based on one’s propensity to avoid death, to say the least.

There are many other interpretations of C/I theory, as a majority of religions along with most sects of other theological thinking reside within the confines of C/I theory, as even something such as no purpose would imply that having no innate or common value is the same as having zero in place for everyone’s objective, thus a common and innate objective is still taking place, creating a logical paradox.

3. As previously stated in the former section, the beliefs that either life does or does not have meaning have been somewhat cemented, in the sense that a half meaning or anything close to that form

would be a meaning. If a banana had half of a meaning, it would still have that meaning, etc. etc.

Following the path of reason which is the nature of a thesis in of itself, for the sake of argument the logical response that life does have meaning is in motion. Within this for there to be a true universal meaning the most logical conclusion of the U5T would be an I/C combination, which initiates that all life has a common and innate purpose across all living things. Within this meaning we can determine the legitimacy of any claims by seeking if it meets three criteria with a fourth being for extra evidence, but not necessary.

Firstly the meaning must make sense in the sense that it does not contradict any scientific facts, for example the earth is not the center of the universe, gravity is controlled by a god, many Pagan beliefs in that sense.

Secondly the meaning must make sense at an evolutionary standpoint, as if there is a greater purpose to life, than evolution must reflect this somewhat convincingly, for example the idea that the meaning of life is to kill all humanity would be preposterous for the reason that this would essentially be life working against itself to destroy its own wishes.

Thirdly the meaning of life must not have any holes in which the theory is provably false, either in which the answer given to criticism is unsatisfactory, or if no answer is given. An unsatisfactory answer would be such as the commonly used statements to guard many religions, that being the classical, “we may not understand the nature of said belief fully.” Which does have merit in the sense that there is much we do not know, but is invalid in the sense that if you had a puzzle with many missing pieces than you would rather guess the image based off of the pieces available, and not simply say “well I don't have all the pieces, therefore I must be correct in my guess.”

Finally, the optional category would be any excess evidence supported by science, psychology, history or any of the likes.

Both Survival and Conquest Theory meet the criteria in the following ways; neither dispute any scientific facts, as they are purely from a philosophical and not metaphysical standpoint, from an evolutionary angle both make sense with conquest/influence and survival being traits which have

commonly two of the most if not the most common factors across all history, which touches on the fourth point. This is along with the fact that point three is perhaps the most subjective in nature, as from my own standing which is admittedly askew with the bias of man, that these two theories lack substantial contrary evidence to be proven false.

In a final and grand conclusion befitting the original thesis statement; the meaning of life can indeed be reasoned to be reasonable, and within that reason anyone can come to their own unique stances to which the meaning of life could take form, weather the variables as aforementioned really do pose a correct synopsis to what the meaning of life has the potential to be, they are all equally as important or non important in figuring out the final meaning to life.

This is to say, if life is truly a thing of which beholding is the key intent, and is quite possible upon first glance, we can say that to form our own meanings to our lives and then challenge those beliefs would be the best course of action, both to correct and build our own opinions.

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