

YOUNIVERSE

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TOWARD A SELF-CENTERED PHILOSOPHY
OF IMMORTALISM AND CRYONICS

R.C.W. ETTINGER



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

*Youniverse:
Toward a Self-Centered Philosophy of Immortalism and Cryonics*

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Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2009

ISBN-10: 1-59942-979-9
ISBN-13: 978-1-59942-979-3

www.universal-publishers.com

Cover design by Shereen Siddiqui

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ettinger, R. C. W. (Robert C. W.)

Youniverse : toward a self-centered philosophy of immortalism and cryonics / Robert C.W. Ettinger.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59942-979-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-59942-979-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Egoism. 2. Life. I. Title.

BJ1474.E88 2009

171'.9--dc22

2009006179

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SMALL ANSWERS TO SOME LARGE QUESTIONS

Some major questions of philosophy have probable answers that are easy to state, although not always easy to understand. Here they are—twenty questions, all overlapping or interrelated in various ways, to be fleshed out in later sections.

1. What should I do next?

In a sense, this is the *only* question in life, so I put it first, the rest being in no particular order. We might call this Tonto's Question. Those old enough may recall that Tonto would ask the Lone Ranger, "What we do now, Kemo Sabe?" You of course will ask yourself. The short answer, for now, is: Read this book.

2. "Wha' hopen?" How did the universe originate?

Nobody has a clue. One guess is that *our* "universe" is a simulation in some joker's computer. Or perhaps a passing fancy in the mind of Koshchei the Deathless, creator of things as they are. (See "The World According to J.B. Cabell.")

3. What is life?

According to some philosophers, it is a disease of matter, a skin condition of the planet. Actually, life-as-we-know-it (at the sentient level) is characterized by the capacity for subjective experience or feeling, the physical basis of which is not yet understood.

4. What is the purpose of life?

"Girls just want to have fun." Boys too.

5. Is it good to be self-centered?

It is physically impossible not to be. You are self-centered, whether you know it or not and whether you like it or not.

6. Does man have free will?

At the conscious level, she does. Beyond that, the question is meaningless.

7. Is the universe deterministic?

Yes.

8. Is fatalism therefore justified?

No.

9. What is consciousness?

An aspect of brain function, perhaps involving a standing wave binding space and time.

10. What are the criteria of survival?

This is an unsolved problem, but the common-sense strategy is to try to save or recover as much as possible of both your material and your configurations.

11. Can a machine think and feel?

We do, and we are machines, or mechanisms, just like every other part of nature.

12. Could a digital computer emulate a person and have subjective experiences?

Probably not. Some types of “automata” might, however.

13. Is the “Turing Test” valid or useful?

No.

14. Is the universe partly random, as in the usual interpretation of quantum theory?

Randomness at a basic level is a meaningless concept—even though there could be parts or aspects of nature forever inaccessible to us.

15. Is any part or aspect of life outside the domain of science?

No.

16. Is it possible for science to answer basic questions of value or what one “ought” to do?

Yes.

17. Is there life after death?

Probably, for those who choose cryonics instead of the cemetery or crematory.

18. Why should I fear death?

Dying can be a drag, but death is not to be feared, since dead people don’t suffer. On the other hand, they don’t enjoy life much either. Almost always, one should strive to stay alive.

19. What about the paradoxes of logic?

There aren't any.

20. If I had one wish, what should I wish for—assuming we rule out things like omnipotence and omniscience?

We are reminded of an old story:

It came to pass in the land of Israel that Solomon, the son of David, found favor in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord did appear unto him, and spake unto him, saying (in a very deep and resonant voice):

“Solomon, son of David, thou hast found favor in mine eyes, wherefore am I moved to grant unto thee that which thou most desireth. What wilt thou?”

Solomon thought about this for a time, while God watched the sparrows falling, and after he had thought long enough, Solomon said:

“Lord, grant me wisdom.”

And the Lord did grant him wisdom—and in that moment, Solomon realized that he should have asked for money!

P.S. If wishing doesn't work, try working.

FOREWORD

ANYTHING NEW? WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

What's it all about, Alfie & Angie?

Is it possible to be happy though honest? Happy though selfish? Selfish though virtuous? Confident though puny? Can we navigate and survive in the vast, dark, cold and dangerous place we inhabit?

I claim to have better answers to these questions (and several others) than any previously available.

Old, New, Borrowed & Blue: Search for a valid self-centered philosophy, or philosophy of self interest, has ancient antecedents and numerous contemporary exponents, but I aim and claim to improve on all of them, while partly sharing with many. Self-centrists are still in a relatively small minority, and not everyone is capable of resonance. There is no assurance that you will receive illumination or benefit from it. You may even get the blues. But the potential reward is more than commensurate with the effort.

To Academics: This is not a “scholarly” work. I don't use much jargon and don't list many of the writers or works in the various fields. Instead, I offer my version of central insights, along with some selected background, aimed primarily at intelligent laymen. Nevertheless, I believe scholars will find some new ideas and challenges here.

It's All About You. Most people realize some of the time, and a few people realize most of the time, that the most important part

of the universe is you, to a near certainty. The most important things are all in your head—literally—and in your own calculations you should be not just number one, but every other number too. Certainly it will take a bit of doing to explain how you can (usually) be self-centered without being “selfish” or uncooperative, how you can (usually) reject altruism and still be kind and even generous, and how you can (usually) be calculating without being cold. Just stay with me for a few hundred pages—if your enemy permits.

Pogo said, “We have met the enemy, and he is us.” The enemy of your understanding is you—or perhaps just a bit more tactfully, we should say your prior conditioning, the memes or cultural censors ready to pillory you for deviations from the alleged norm. But if the enemy has let you read even this far, maybe he is over-confident and you can outflank him.

Names & Games: This volume might have been called *The Book of Ought*. “Ought” as in “should,” not as in “naught.” Not “should” as in “Big Daddy said so,” but “should” as in “What can I do in order truly to maximize my personal satisfaction in the long run?”

Happiness is elusive, and its pursuit is the game of life. Most of you are losing the game, because you have been misinformed about the rules. We’ll try to change that.

If You Play by the Old Rules, You Can’t Win. In our generation, the conditions of life have begun to change radically—almost unnoticed.

1. Death is no longer inevitable—even death from old age.

Aging research may be able to save our younger people by eliminating the causes of senescence, whether genetic or otherwise. Babies born today may never die of old age or any other “natural” cause.

Cryonics may save even those near death today, and some who have already “died”, by keeping them in frozen storage until repair technology is equal to their needs.

This means that all previous bets are off. Unless you are one of a tiny minority, your outlook and values are built on ancient premises of a life brief and ignorant.

2. We are just beginning to study the inmost anatomy and physiology of the brain.

Values are based on wants or needs. Yet, so far we do not really know, on a basic level, what we are or what we need. We may think we know what we want, but we don't necessarily know what we *ought* to want. This is largely a *biological* question, which cannot be definitively answered until (at minimum) we understand the anatomy and physiology of feeling (qualia). But we can make a start, and build something more useful than any previous philosophy.

Old-style philosophers always went lame in trying to address individual needs, partly because the conditions of the past were simply incompatible with human requirements, so an unhappy compromise was the best their "wisdom" could achieve. In plain words, they lied a lot, to themselves as well as to their auditors.

It's still dark out there, but a faint glow is on the horizon.

The Unfairness of It All: Life isn't fair. So what? Stop the world, and let you off? Picket the Pontiff? Stick your head out the window and yell, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not gonna take it anymore!"? Mumble a mantra? Have another drink? Find someone who will make nice? Whistle a happy tune? Work harder?

Whoa, there. Work harder? Aren't you working too hard already?

Maybe—but you are almost certainly working with the wrong priorities. Sure, money is important, even vital in a literal sense; and so are social status and many other goodies. But unless you straighten out your priorities, you are probably doomed, literally and forever.

Figuring priorities is *itself* work, and work for which most people are unsuited and ill prepared. Go complain to Management. Then settle down and do what you need to do.

New Rules, Better Odds, Humongous Prizes: Some of this material is original. (I thought of it independently.) Some is novel. (I was apparently the first.) Some is both original and novel ... and of course nobody cares about that. The important thing is relevance (along with entertainment).

The ethical and social philosophers of past and present have been characterized mostly by error and irrelevance, blather and vacuity. They have earned the disregard shown by the public,

which has an appetite for nonsense only when it is amusing or comforting, not ponderous and dreary.

St. Thomas Aquinas thought he could prove whether or not one angel could “move another angel’s will,” and that this was an interesting and appropriate topic of learned discourse. Spinoza thought all motivation stemmed from the instinct of self-preservation, and went on to “show” that we should sacrifice ourselves for a higher good. Nietzsche derided the *Heerden-moral* (herd morality) of Christianity, but could offer instead only the *Herren-moral* (morality of the master, a foretaste of Nazism), and still called for individual sacrifice. The moderns have decorated their discussions with a lot of references to quantum theory and the DNA helix, but have not done much better on the bottom line, which is: What should we do, and what hope is there for the individual?

I propose to show what we ought to do, and why—sketch the nature of the self as best we can currently guess, and draw the logical but unsettling conclusions.

There will be no pretense, no misdirection, no claims of divine guidance or special privilege. Facts will be referenced when appropriate, and opinions labeled. A light touch will be essayed rather often, even at risk of an accusation of flippancy, to avoid the MEGO reaction; but the basic intent is to reveal the world as it is, and ourselves as we can become. This is a new and greater gospel.

The bad news is that there is still no certainty, no guarantee of anything; you still have to place your bets and take your chances.

The good news is that you now have a better chance to win the game of life, and that the prizes are unprecedented. Your life need no longer be limited—not in duration, not in quality, not in power, and not by any spurious prior claims of institutions asserting a mortgage on your soul. In short, the truth will make you free, in a sense and scope never before known.

Stick around.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Intro Note 1—The Pork Problem: This is not a book about swine. I do indeed say the bottom line is looking out for number one—and figuring out what that means—but not in any simple-minded sense; the hog at the trough is no one’s ideal.

Self-interest is not “selfishness”; the Pleasure Principle does not mean you grab every swivel-hipped temptation that rhumbas by.

It is not about self-congratulation either. You are a long way from adequate, let alone splendid. Nevertheless, your primary duty is to yourself. I will prove this, among other things, and explicate Auden’s plaint:

*We are all here to help others.
What I can’t figure out is, what are the others here for?*

Intro Note 2—Promises & Warnings: I claim to prove—not just assert, but prove—that “me-first” and “feel-good” constitute the only possible bases for conscious motivation. But the arguments are not easy and the consequences are not comfortable. Those who stay with me will find life better, but in most respects, not easier. The new guidelines, for example, will often be different than the old, but will also be more demanding, not less. The new outlook will offer greater hope than ever before, but will also demand more effort and discipline. Better nourishment, but still no free lunch.

Intro Note 3—It’s Going to Cost You: The ideas in this book are liberating. But freedom isn’t cheap.

Most people don’t even want to be free. Slavery has its attractions: familiarity, safety, and indeed its own freedoms, viz., free-

dom from many risks and most responsibilities. Just do what you're told or have been taught and Massuh will take care of you (in his fashion).

You can emancipate yourself from some of the chains of tradition—even those of death itself. But the price of liberty is more than vigilance. You must consciously resolve to shake off the shackles of alien interests and discover where your own true interests lie.

You will have to look in some dark places. To put it another way, you will have to look yourself in the face, and embrace what you have been trained to believe is ugly. You will have to learn to like your real self, while most people prefer not even to know their real selves.

Yet, in the end, if you have the strength to call your enemies by their true names and reject their insolent claims, and go on from there to build your own universe, the reward may be more than commensurate with the cost.

Intro Note 4—Lies We Live By: The Antiquity of Newspeak.
 Humanity has always lived by lies—majestic, Orwellian lies.

Giving is receiving.

Sacrifice is reward.

Obedience is freedom.

And the ultimate capper: *Death is life.*

—with some “reasons” such as the notion that we “live on”...

...through our descendants.

...through our works.

...through the institutions we support.

...in Heaven.

...in the Universal Spirit.

Some of these lies have tiny facets of truth to them. But even if we needed these grains of truth, we would have to swallow some bitter pills of poison to get them, and this is no longer necessary—at least for some of us.

In the early 21st Century, the conditions and premises of life have undergone a fundamental change—almost unnoticed as a practical matter.

One hears the dismal refrain of the “wise” that technology only changes gadgets and peripherals, that “human nature” and

“morality” and “spirit” remain the unchanging linchpins of attitude and conduct. We shall see that the fact is far different: technology has already provided the wherewithal to liberate the human body *and* spirit.

A new world is ours for the taking and a new self for the making. Our gradually developing discussion is intended to spell out the evidence in broad and in fine.

Intro Note 5—New Questions: One version of an old saw goes, “If Hare Krishna is the answer, it must be a pretty strange question.” Most of the answers of classic philosophy are wrong, partly because they start with the wrong questions—questions that often already contain implicit answers, because of the hidden premises. Only a tiny fraction think to examine our assumptions with anything like rigor.

In particular, even among those who accept the primacy of seeking personal satisfaction and survival, it is extremely rare to question the mechanisms of satisfaction and the criteria of survival. I haven’t solved these problems, but I put them in clearer perspective, and offer some interim guidelines.

Intro Note 6—For Goodness’ Sake: There might be said to be two basic questions of philosophy: (1) “What is?” and (2) “What is good?” I’ll devote some space to the former, but my main concern is the latter.

Most philosophers still say that “good” or “bad” can only be evaluated with respect to means, not ends. Nothing, they say, is good or bad in itself, except by conviction in the individual or agreement in society. Most working scientists agree that values lie outside the province of science. Many laymen think that good and bad, right and wrong, are in the word of God or in our DNA, and most of the rest agree that “Everyone has a right to his own opinion.”

They are all wrong, although the DNA people come closest. There is an objective criterion for the validity of ends, viz., certain conditions/events in your brain, which we are just beginning to sort out. It is useful, even though over-simplified, to call such a content *feel-good*. The whole study is relatively simple in principle, but very complicated in practice. In particular, while the foundation is in biology, the application also requires experience and logic. We’ll gradually see how it goes.

Intro Note 7—New & Improved? You are always being asked to buy something “new and improved.” Some of my main theses were anticipated, at least in part, by many previous writers and speakers, in some cases, millennia earlier. In particular:

The Hedonists, Epicureans and Utilitarians, and several other groups, all had good ideas, but quickly got off track, were unable to develop their theses, or mixed in some bad ideas, and have long been dismissed from the mainstream. I’ll dust them off and shine them up.

“Enlightened self interest” has a long and respectable history, but with large gaps and much confusion in the rationale and application. Perhaps the closest to my view is that of Robert J. McShea and Daniel W. McShea, who have written on biology and value theory, but they also miss important distinctions and specifics—more about that later.

So much for the Foundations; now, the Frontiers:

Brain science and computer science—biophysics and math—in recent times have revealed both new philosophical problems and new ways to handle old ones.

One of the most obvious new questions arising out of brain science and computer science together is whether a brain is a computer, and whether a computer is or could be a brain. New light is also cast—and new shadows too—on the questions of what constitutes a mind, a soul, a person.

Much of this will be gradually illuminated as we move along.

Intro Note 8—Self-Interest: The Youniversal Motivator. It is self-interest that drives the world. This is not only the way it is—

It is the way it should be, and more than that, the only way it *can* be.

The hedonists, epicureans and utilitarians—and even Buddhists, in their fashion—thought they understood this, and started out more or less on the right track. But they quickly became confused and lost their way. Aristotle understood it too—at least the rudiments of it—but failed to develop it.

Self-interest is a deceptively simple-sounding concept; but in actuality, it is complex and slippery, with many levels of subtlety. Among other things, it cannot be applied without a reasonable grasp of the nature of the physical world that gives rise to all our constraints and all our opportunities.

Of those who are seriously addressing the question for the first time, some will quickly concede the primacy of self interest, based simply on definitions. After all, *your* decisions are based on *your* values or wants, which means they are intended for *your* satisfaction (or to minimize dissatisfaction). Others—most—will need more convincing.

My promise is to clarify the concept and its applications—and to clarify also what we know or guess about the world of nature, whose rules set our only limits.

By obeying the real rules—rather than arbitrary dictates of archaic societies or imagined divine authorities—you win such freedom as exists.

You do not escape duty—but you learn how to do your only real duty, which is to yourself.

You do not entirely escape guilt—but you learn to feel guilt only when it is appropriate and useful, when you have offended your own nature and compromised your own future.

You do not escape pain, but you learn not to inflict it on yourself.

You do not escape work, but you do escape despair.

The pursuit of self-interest is the most American of endeavors, because it is the pursuit of happiness...which you may even catch.

Intro Note 9—Ecstasy Engineered? If the Pleasure Principle is the correct basis of value, doesn't that have some peculiar implications? If what we want—and ought to want—is just to feel good, then shouldn't our continuous goal be to feel better? Does that mean our ultimate goal should be non-stop orgasm or the psychological equivalent? Can we bio-engineer ecstasy? Are there any limits to the sublime—or to the ridiculous?

These are good questions, but they do not—as some imagine—constitute a *reductio ad absurdum* for our thesis.

The quantification of satisfaction, the problem that stymied and discredited the Epicureans and Utilitarians, remains unsolved. We do not yet have the biological knowledge we need. We don't know the nature(s) of the “self circuit” and its modulations, or the relation between basic feeling and functions of cognition and abstraction.

We do know, for example, that someone can be more motivated by a project—which may involve mostly plain hard work—

than by present pleasures. A basement tinkerer may prefer to keep working and miss his supper, or even miss a session of sex. Duty may take precedence over delight. Clearly, satisfaction comes in various styles or flavors, which have not yet been sorted out or placed in hierarchies. This does not imply any fundamental contradiction, but only warns us against premature conclusions about specifics.

David Pearce, a young Brit, has written *The Hedonistic Imperative* (see www.hedweb) which goes beyond anything I have previously seen in the Pursuit of Happiness. He thinks we can indeed more or less go onward and upward, forevermore, Excelsior! Sublime to sublimer to even more sublime, with pain or even minor irritations relegated to the primitive past. He might even be right. I'll have a bit more to say on his work later.

Intro Note 10—Word Games? Tautologies? When one of the old guard (almost everybody) is told why there is no such thing as genuine altruism—that the basic motive is always to please oneself—the shrewder of them may respond something like this:

“You’re just twisting words. If my highest value and prime motive is service to [others, the state, God, art, whatever], then I suppose you could say that in this service I please myself. But I am still serving, and still subordinating most of the usual selfish interests that people have. There is still a profound difference between the “selfishness” of service, if you insist on calling it that, and the ugly selfishness of—say—trying to get rich. Service is still a higher value than money-grubbing. Word games apart, it is still basically appropriate to say that service is altruistic and greed is selfish.”

Relatively sophisticated traditionalists may use philosophical language, call positions similar to mine “egoism”, and claim that our references to satisfaction, pleasure, etc. are “tautological” and our claim non-falsifiable, hence not scientific. In other words, they say, if we label as “selfish” anything that we want in any way or degree, then certainly all motivation is “selfish”—but that is not a valid or useful procedure, they insist.

Let us just note that the simplest way to deflate the claim of “word twisting” is to ask the objector: “How do *you* determine what you ought to do? My starting point is the biological, internal satisfaction(s) of the organism (me); what is yours?” I guar-

antee his answer(s) will be incomprehensible, contradictory, arbitrary, circular, vacuous, or/and based on hidden premises.

Intro Note 11—Cryonics & Immortalism. For many people, the most immediate and important aspect of sci/tech is the potential of saving and greatly extending your life through cryonics—cryo-preservation (in deep cold) of the legally dead in hope of eventual restoration to youthful good health by future medical technology. Beyond that is also the possibility of a transcendent future for individuals now living. I have written two previous books on these topics, *The Prospect of Immortality* and *Man into Superman*. These are available in full on the web site of the Cryonics Institute, www.cryonics.org, along with a large quantity of related and updated material. Brief sketches are included in this book.

Intro Note 12—Life & Death, Identity & Survival: Suppose you were blasted to smithereens in an explosion, but then somehow the smithereens were gathered together and reassembled into you, good as new, just as you were the moment before the explosion. (If you prefer, think about the beam-me-up machine in *Star Dreck*, also known as *Star Trek*.) Would this be survival? Would it be the “real” you?

Play with thought experiments and answers all you like, but the fact is that in our present state of ignorance, no one knows. No one even knows for sure that we “really” survive from day to day in the ordinary course of events, by rigorously defensible criteria. So what should one do? One should read on, of course.

Intro Note 13—Binding Space & Time: At this point, just a very brief introduction to an approach toward reconciliation of intuition and a rigorous philosophy of personal identity or criteria of survival:

First, I postulate that “you” are a physical system with spatial and temporal extent.

A physical system could hardly exist at a geometric point in space, if there is any such thing, so it must have spatial extent. It must bind space. The important parts and functions of your brain occupy a non-zero volume.

Likewise, a system could hardly live at an instant of time, if there is such a thing. For subjective experience, it seems necessary to have change and the passage of time. You must bind time. Any feeling or experience probably requires non-zero time. This notion is reinforced by the fact that feelings involve signals inside the brain, which require time between initiating and acquiring and interpreting.

This means that you identify in greater degree with your nearer continuers (yourself at later times), both because they are more like your present self and because you have a clearer idea of what their interests or values will be. There is overlap all along the line, with greater overlap for nearer continuers and predecessors. This fits nicely with the intuition of most people, as biology and evolution have shaped them.

Of course, nothing is yet proven. Among other questions, we are still mostly in the dark regarding the basics of both space and time—objective time and subjective time. Still, this view has a good deal going for it.

Intro Note 14—Moving Targets & Living with Uncertainty: Choosing goals and routes, or objectives and tactics, is a bit like shooting at a moving target. You must try to achieve, not necessarily what you think you want most right now, but what you guess you are likely to want tomorrow, and what you ought to want tomorrow. And you must try to achieve it under changing conditions. A formidable task—but if ideal decisions are impossible, good decisions can usually be found.

The mark of maturity is serenity in the face of uncertainty. Serenity—or some approximation thereto—is achieved through a complex process of learning and development, doing one's best to stack the odds in one's favor and against the mindless, casual cruelty of circumstance. What must be mightily resisted is the temptation to accept the popular or plausible assurances that have fooled most of the people most of the time.

Can you trust the best or the wisest—even if you can identify them? No. Can you trust yourself? No. Is this a counsel of despair? Emphatically not. It is a counsel of careful courage, at every stage making the best decisions you know how, and building from there—even if you have to demolish some previous structures along the way.

Intro Note 15—Grand Finale? As a boy, I was impressed by the incredible gallantry of ordinary people leading their “lives of quiet desperation,” bearing their burdens, pains, disappointments and injustices with relatively little complaint, going to their mind-numbing little jobs every day. Finally, they die quietly and rot even more quietly. For a generation or a few they may be dimly remembered—which helps them not at all—but in the blink of an eye, in geologic time, they will be forgotten, and maybe the whole human race as well. Of course, I realized that evolution must have made us this way—but I for one would not hold still for that.

The only alternative I could see back then was the “grand finale” or going out with a bang. If life or its prospects became too unpleasant, I would gather or seize what resources I could and have myself a going-away party, which might take one of two forms.

(a) I would literally party, buying enough women and wine and whatever for a thorough binge, and then a clean exit with a bullet to the head.

(b) I would exploit my nothing-to-lose status by some self-sacrificial feat of derring-do, more or less in the martyr mode. Maybe assassinate a dictator or something like that.

Of course, it’s different now. A “finale”—loud or quiet—is not inevitable. Given the potential of anti-senescence and cryonics, there is ample rationale for prudence and cooperation up to “death” and beyond.

Intro Note 16—Learning What to Want: Your problem is what to do. This breaks down into two problems, one of them being how to get what you want. The other is how to decide whether you have the right target, or whether to try to change what you want. What you want isn’t necessarily what you ought to want.

One person I read about wanted to be a chicken. Some want to be Napoleon. Some want to be God. A great many want to be movie actors. A great many more just want to lie down. The issue, however, is what they (and we) should want, with respect to many possible alternatives, in many different situations. *This* is another way to put the main problem of philosophy. We must identify our bottom-line biological requirements, and decide how best to satisfy these in light of logic and the physical nature of the universe.

Intro Note 17—It Ain't Easy—but it's not impossible either.

Is a frog's ass waterproof? Some of my propositions will be seen as just that obvious, and every little bit helps.

I must acknowledge that not all of what follows is just fun and games, and not everyone will be able (at first try) to hack through the occasional thickets. We are, after all, traversing some pretty rough terrain—trying, indeed, to make progress toward unriddling the universe, or at least the innerverse. But I have made a rather strenuous effort to keep it simple in most cases, and clear in all cases, and I do believe there is something here for most readers.

Some readers may fault me for occasional choice of soft targets for ridicule, but I think these have a rationale. Seeing examples of smart people falling for really dumb ideas gives food for thought.

Following are the main theses and topics. I propose to *prove* the theses, in the sense of offering evidence that should be persuasive to any open mind. (Confucius say, man with hole in head have open mind.)

I. The world is one, with no dualism of matter and spirit. It can be likened to a giant machine (although not necessarily in the classic Laplacian sense); all its aspects and parts, including people (to the extent that parts are separable) are cogs or smaller machines; and this does not diminish us, but on the contrary, offers enormous hope, because *machines can be repaired and improved*.

II. The problem of the person (or the nature of personal identity and consciousness, or the structure of the self, or the problem of criteria of survival) may not be the profoundest—but is certainly the most important—of all scientific questions. Some tentative insights are offered, and implications of these and of alternatives are discussed.

III. *Me-first* and *feel-good* are the essential foundations of all legitimate value systems for the individual. This ought to be seen as a truism, but most of us cannot overcome our conditioning and genetic programming without extended and many-faceted discussion—and after that comes the hard part, the tricky interpretation and application.

IV. Aging and death can be conquered—not only for the species, but for individuals now living. If necessary, nanotechnology of repair (Drexler machines) will virtually assure that we reach the goals of gerontology and cryonics. Duration of your life need have no limit—even if you die next month.

V. How to do it: Preachments & Practices