

LOOKING BACK ON LOCKDOWN

ON OPENING HIS COMPUTER, OVER HIS BREAKFAST CORNFLAKES, OUR LOCKED-DOWN HUMAN FRIEND CHECKS HIS INBOX:

(1) Dear Human, You are a vanishingly tiny speck dwarfed by even the tiniest object in the heavens. Do not be depressed, you can't help it. Sincerely, The Universe.

(replies) Well, that's sad. You mean, like, I'm insignificant? (sniffles).

(2) Dear Human, Your slightest actions can cause chain reactions that propagate forward, like the butterfly flapping up a hurricane, eventually reaching all of space and time. So be of good cheer, Your Insignificance...it's all relative. Sincerely, Chaos Theory.

That's really cool!! I can change the universe...here goes...

(3) Dear Human, Your "actions" are merely the result of your brain's chemical structure and its neurons firing or not firing at any given time. You can't help it. Sincerely, Causality.

You mean...I'm not in charge??? Oh no, that cannot be.....

(4) Dear Human, Causality is LYING. Also NOT LYING. Also an entangled superposition of lying and not-lying states. Just like Schrodinger's alive/dead pussycat. Best to avoid all observers, lest one collapses your wave function. Sincerely, Quantum Mechanics.

Okay. Huh???

(5) Dear Human, We've invented lots of neat things to distract you from the void of meaning that is your existence. Cheer up, try a life drawing class. Sincerely, Art.

Ooooh....sounds much more promising...let's get started...

(6) Dear Human, ALL EXISTENCE IS VOID OF MEANING. Sincerely, Postmodernism.

Okay, so what's the point...I'm gonna end it all...

(7) Dear Human, No way. Your selfish genes program you to live. Sincerely, Evolution.

Okay. Then I'll descend into hedonism...

(8) Dear Human, You can't afford it, unless you mortgage everything. Sincerely, Economics.

Okay, that does it, I'm already bankrupt. Dear Reality, I'm computing a new simulated reality program where I'm in charge and everything works the way I like...

(9) Dear Human, Welcome to My Creative Club. Get started. Sincerely, God.

Er...oh??? Thanks, but, um, er...look at Your mess down here...too much to fix. think I'll just stay locked down... (Deletes all messages, concentrates on the cornflakes.)

Lockdown can't last. As the old song goes: Be like I, hold our heads on high, somewhere there's a bluebird of happiness. We may find, greater peace of mind, knowing there's a

bluebird of happiness. And when he sings to you, though you're feeling blue, somewhere there's a ray of light shines through.... Cheerio, best regards to all U3A colleagues, John O'C.