* pleasure is relative
* things are good because of their history: counterfeit paintings
* things that have no history are only face valued
* things that have history are valued only for their memory
* good enough history, and the object is invaluable
* pain is similar: if there is known malevolent intention, the pain is way more intense

The Stranger addressed the essential questions best. I do not mean to say that it specifically answered all of them, it mostly showed exactly how not to answer the questions.

What is the purpose of your existence?

There will come soft rains

The purpose of our existence is to make the world a better place. If we are not doing that, than the world portrayed in “soft rains” will happen. We are to improve, make others happy as much as it is in our power. This is happiness, giving away, this is meaning, that we give what we have away, and our purpose is to give others the will to have purpose. If we are not living out a purpose, than all that will be will be the earth against us. If there had been more people living out a purpose of peace, the story could have never happened.

“How to buy happiness”

I don’t really know what page to quote for Soft rains. It was the idea behind the whole story, not any one page.

What is happiness and what makes one happy?

Science of happiness: an experiment in gratitude

Happiness is, simply, dopamine being released in the brain. However, the things that we would think would cause this release do not. Rather than the old proverb, it is more blessed to give than to receive proves true. Rather than receiving chocolate, we give it away to be happy. Rather than being smiled at, we ourselves need to smile. If the world was more full of givers, it would be a happier place, both because of the happiness of the receiver, as well as the giver.

Happiness being dopamine is from “Happy”

People who gave away had a 5% average increase in happiness while people spent the extra money on themselves had none.

What does it mean to live a meaningful life?

How to buy happiness

Meaning is the hardest of the terms to pin down. If a person feels that they have a meaningful life, than they have one. I quote “how to buy happiness” because I think that the key to happiness is often counterintuitive, like giving to be happy. We would think that we would be pleased to play xbox all the time, but this is not true. People who experience meaning are those who do the crazy things: leaving a high paying job to work at a shelter for the weak and dying. Why? It seems backwards- give your life to experience meaning, hoard yourself to be alone, feeling wasted as a person.

Meaning being self defined is really an existentialist idea. I’m going to cite the slides.

The man who gave up his wealthy, fashionable life to serve at Mother Theresa’s home for the sick and dying was from Happy.