**Bronsemedalje BSPEE 2026 – Jonas Benjamin Kwiet, UWCRCN**

In this essay, I will examine the statement, “Things don’t have purposes.” Something having a purpose means it exists and functions for a reason. In human psychology, we often strive to find purpose in ourselves, seeking reasons and answers. However, if we step back, why do we feel the need to find a purpose? Do we even need a purpose? The central question then emerges: is there even a purpose to find? To answer this question, we need to contrast the terms purpose and function. A function is the ability to perform a certain act. On the other hand, purpose means something was designed especially to do that deed. This means that even if a bent fork functions to eat soup, its purpose was to eat other foods. Therefore, something can have a function without having a purpose. The extract’s images of “a thread in a cloth,” “agrass-blade in a field,” and “wind blowing on the grass” suggest that meaning may come less from having a fixed purpose and more from belonging to, and affecting, a larger whole. This essay therefore argues that neither the universe nor humans have a designed purpose; rather, we function, and being part of something bigger does not mean we have a purpose.

Firstly, before we examine the purpose of humans, we need to look at the bigger picture: the purpose of the universe. The extract says that things don’t have purposes “as if the universe were a machine, where every part has a useful function.” I would argue that not every part needs to have a useful function. To determine whether something has a “purpose,” we should look at what it is inherently designed to do rather than get into detail about “every part.” The extract suggests, “What’s the function of a galaxy?” For me, a galaxy’s function is to host life like mine. Therefore, one could argue that the purpose of the universe is to host life. This argument holds for every human being, as without a galaxy we couldn’t live. We humans use the universe’s resources, for example, sunlight for solar panels, or natural minerals here on Earth. We have learned and adapted to use the universe’s functions as efficiently as possible. Consequently, the universe’s function is to host life, giving life the resources and a habitable environment to thrive; thus, its purpose is to host life.

This is a simple yet important function, because it is hard to argue against your own existence. However, you could look at this through another lens: humans are an exception, and the universe doesn’t actually have a purpose. If the universe’s purpose is to host life, why don’t we have confirmed signs of other life beyond Earth? Why shouldn’t every moon and planet have life? This weakens the universe’s purpose, as it doesn’t align with its so-called purpose. However, this only shows the universe isn’t effective; it doesn’t completely rebut it, since the universe still hosts life like us.

This raises the question of whether Earth is designed for life, or whether our existence is simply a matter of evolution and luck. Life on Earth has developed exponentially, from being unable to leave water to traveling outside our atmosphere. This could show that life on Earth has simply learned to adapt to harsh conditions. This would mean that the universe doesn’t have a purpose; rather, it functions to host humans. Therefore, even if Earth functions to host life, it could be a matter of sheer luck and evolution rather than a concrete function. Consequently, Earth functions to host us, but it wasn’t designed for that; therefore, it doesn’t have a purpose.

Now that we have established that the universe doesn’t have a designed purpose, but rather it functions to host life, the question remains: do we humans even have a purpose? The text

answers this partly by saying, “What does matter is that we’re a part”. Are humans just another type of life created by coincidence and shaped by evolution, or is there a deeper purpose to our existence? To answer this question, we first need to accept the theory of evolution, at least to some extent. This theory holds that humans evolved through natural selection. It also describes humans as having no greater purpose than simply existing. I agree that humans stem from millions of years of evolution, but I will examine his point about purpose more closely. In a way, humans are special because, as far as we know, no other race has ever sat so high on the food chain. Life on Earth has existed for millions of years, while humans have existed for only a fraction of that time. Yet we have achieved what no race before us has. The human race has undergone massive, exponential development, allowing us to go from living in caves to traveling to space in a relatively short amount of time. But does being so superior to other life forms mean we have a deeper purpose than they do? I would argue that we don’t. There will always be a superior form of life in every period of Earth’s history; just because we are further above second place than other instances doesn’t give us a bigger purpose. I believe we only have functions, for example, living, surviving, and continuing to develop as a living organism. Ultimately, this means that humans, like the universe, do not have a purpose; rather, we have functions that allow us to use the universe as a host and continue to develop as a species.

In conclusion, this essay agrees with the extract’s claim that “Things do not have a purpose.” To figure this out, we had to distinguish between a function and a purpose. This helped us conclude that the universe can function as a host for life, although that doesn’t prove it was designed for that purpose. Human life may result from evolution, adaptation, and chance rather than intention. Similarly, even though humans are highly developed and dominant compared to other species, that doesn’t necessarily give us a deeper purpose. Instead, we have functions such as survival, development, and continuing as a species. Ultimately, the absence of a fixed purpose doesn’t make human life meaningless; rather, it suggests that our significance comes from being part of a wider universe and from the functions we perform within it.