“Perhaps laughter will then have formed an alliance with wisdom; perhaps only 'gay science' will remain.”

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By Caroline and Michael

Introduction (What Is It)

The thought of Friedrich Nietzsche is saliently distinguished by his radically individualist critiques of art and morality, agitating for discontinuity from fixed social traditions or orthodox religious institutions. In this meeting, we build off of our prior knowledge of “The Genealogy of Morals” as we work our way through the opening sections of “La Gaya Scienza,” a loosely ordered selection of aphorisms that compactly represent Nietzsche’s larger system of thought. Informed by our further knowledge of his historical contexts as well as his other works such as “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” or “The Birth of Tragedy,” we question and contemplate Nietzsche’s historical Weltanschauung and his views on power and the individual, carefully setting ourselves apart from those principles that to us appear outdated while appreciating the thinker’s style and novelty of thought.

Transcript

Caroline: So, some people are going to come later, but we can get started.

Kolb: How did you guys like the readings?

Caroline: I personally really enjoyed his style. In the beginning, he talks about moral teachings and their place in human existence, in parallel with human purpose. What do you guys think about that?

Kolb: Wait, how far was this? Was this the part about intellectual…? I forgot what the term was.

Caroline: I think it was at the beginning. He was talking about how people were not thinking.

Kolb: Yeah, it was something like intellectual free will.

Caroline: Intellectual conscience?

Kolb: Yeah, yeah.

Caroline: Yeah, and I feel like he has a weird relationship with reason and science. He says we have to have a gay science, but it feels satirical when he says it. He uses a lot of exclamation marks, which I find funny and enjoyable.

Kolb: To be completely honest, I didn't get through the whole reading.

Michael: I think it'd be necessary to revisit each section if we get to it. If we were to recap, we'd be recapping 25 sections.

Caroline: I guess we can start at the beginning. The first one is about the teachers of the purpose of existence. I find it interesting when he talks about how, as social animals, our purpose, essence, is to preserve the human species. He says that even if we do something evil and seemingly horrible, it doesn't really have a backwards effect on the human species. So is he saying that humans don't have the ability to affect the progress of the species as a whole?

Kolb: What I understood is that after a while, since we're still alive, humans physically can't do anything to harm themselves, but this was written before the world wars or climate change really took effect. I wouldn't agree with that now

Caroline: I think Nietzsche would say that, even though it may seem bad, all roads lead to humans' benefit, right?

Michael: I think you can also say that nuclear weapons are not the product of individual human actions, either.

Kolb: I can see, how all the events that have happened, up to when Nietzsche would have written this, I think it's a fair argument to make.

Caroline: Yeah, like he's saying the whole is made up of its parts. The entire human species is made up of each individual, and individual actions can coalesce into something impactful.

Michael: He also says that, whether you do good or evil, it doesn't boil down to anything significant in the end, right. Everyone thinks that the indifference between good and evil as values is a recurring theme that we see throughout. I think chapter 19, or what chapter was it that he mentions that there are equal amounts of pleasure and suffering, like if you have a lot of pleasure in the world, then there's equal reciprocal suffering.

Caroline: I think it's chapter 15. I think it's something common in philosophy. People say that to have something good, you have to have something bad. Like you can't know pleasure without pain.

Myles: I agree with that.

Michael: Yeah, it's very standard. He himself recognized that it's dialectical. He also says corruption is natural. And I think that's chapter 23.

Caroline: He also says that evil can be beneficial. It's a matter of perspective. If a strong character, some type of strong person, faces some evil, it can make them stronger. He gives the metaphor of a tree. If a tree faces a storm and still stands, that storm isn't evil to the tree. Wait I'm explaining it badly but

Kolb: So like, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

Caroline: Yeah, that's what it made me think about.

Michael: The quote is, "The poison of which weaker natures perish strengthens the strong."

Caroline: His style really reminds me of Ralph Emerson, if you guys know him, and transcendentalists. I love his style too, it has a very sensual style, if it makes sense. I found parallels with the two, especially about people not thinking enough for themselves. He also says something about how institutions of society, especially in terms of education, diminish the space for conscious deliberation. Like our society today, actually. And I think Emerson talks about this especially in democratic societies, where the value of literature is diminishing. But Nietzsche takes it from a broader angle, I think.

Michael: Yeah, I think I recall someplace where Nietzsche addresses that.

Caroline: Yeah, it's chapter 6 or something. Where he says people nowadays think too fast, with no time or place for conscious deliberation and reflection. It like every second, we're just thinking. It sounds odd to me, we're thinking every second of our days, but he says people used to not do that. Which makes me question him a little, like what do you mean people used to not think constantly.

Kolb: That also sounds odd coming from a philosopher.

Caroline: Yeah, I bet these ideas were brewing in his brain for a long while.

Michael: Hold on, where does he discuss this? I thought it was… he talks about it in terms of virtues right?

Caroline: Yeah, I think dignity. I can find it.

Helen: I think it's chapter six.

Michael: I think he also talks about it in 21, but that's in relation to something else I think.

Caroline: In chapter 6, he says people used to he says that people used to need desire to be wise and to think, rather than like having this thought like instantly pass through them at every second.

Michael: I think it's a differentiation between having to think on the spot and to think non-deliberated, I guess, spontaneous thoughts and versus having to, while thinking carefully and deliberately and in-depth. So I guess depth is really the key distinction here, that we're not allowed the kind of leisure of just thinking enough about a certain topic anymore. And I would argue that that's even more the case today. Like, there's the chief thousand phenomena that you can kind of suggest that really very much tie into this. And that if there was such a difference between Nietzsche and the ancient world, then there's all the more difference between Nietzsche and our world.

Caroline: He really refers to the bombardment of information and thoughts. He says there's so much to study in moral philosophy that we can't extensively study a single category. We can't really extensively know, and extensively study, the large, broad field of moral philosophy. There's just too much. He also mentions the tempo of life. Like our lives are really turned on the second, everything is about time and we're just in quick rhythms. Do you guys think what he's saying about human life is true?

Kolb: So when he says we think too much, he's more it's saying we should think in a relaxing way more, like yeah like stop, stop thinking about things that actually matter.

Caroline: I feel like he's saying that like we should think deeper, we should spend more time I guess like in a relaxed manner to kind of have the thoughts materialize.

Michael: Yeah and Kolb I think relax is a really good word. Just because like it reminds me of… do you know what the etymology of the word scholar is?

Kolb: Scholar?

Michael: Yeah it comes in the Greek σχολάζω or σχολία, which means to have leisure time.

Kolb: I don't know Greek…

Michael: Scolas. Ego or scholas though it means um I am free I enjoy I have to–

Kolb: Is that not Latin?

Michael: That's Greek.

Caroline: Oh very interesting.

Michael: I mean schola is also Latin, but more to come from the Greek. Um, I mean Caroline was asking, do we find Nietzsche to generally be saying true stuff? I think that's not an easy question to ask. I'd be curious to have you guys share your thoughts on whether you guys find Nietzsche novel or not.

Caroline: No.

Michael: Like, is what he saying really familiar

Caroline: Not necessarily. When I was reading, I found a lot of like connections with Ralph Emerson. And he's like…

Kolb: That comes way afterwards, right? Oh wait, Emerson was old? I thought he was… no that's my bad.

Caroline: They're very similar. So I feel like Nietzsche is kind of building upon Emerson in a way, but also like slightly diverging. Emerson has this essay called “The Poet” where he talks about like, oh, the poet is this divine being with inspiration that can hold up society and man. But Nietzsche also talks, I think, about like poets at some point, and he says that every person is kind of an instrument to the species in their own different way, which connects back to Emerson. I found that interesting.

Junyi: Do you guys think it reminds you of a reading from Nagel, like the absurdism thing, like whether we should live life in irony, because like in this essay, kind of goes on random tangents. Like whether we should live life in irony. This essay goes on many tangents. Most these different ironies, think, like contradictions in life, it sounds like saying, oh, this, there's not much of a purpose we should pursue because we can't really define what that is. So like, maybe that ‘relaxed’ is kind of like, you know, we should live in irony and do whatever we want to do.

Caroline: That actually, yeah, it made me think of that. When I was reading it, I was like, is he saying that we should just like, like do whatever? Like, is he saying that like, if evil isn't like, some limiting, like, limiting us, for lack of a better phrase, like, can we just do anything? And I see Michael as very astonished. So you could go ahead and say something.

Michael: I think he's saying that. But I think a lot of people are saying that. But I guess, so you can kind of hold this position or this worldview, but with different shades of "we can do whatever it is that we want," I think. Because of course, no one really means that we can really do whatever it is that we want, right? Yeah. So I wouldn't say that Nietzsche doesn't recognize a kind of general purpose of living. In fact, I think he recognizes very much a purpose of living, and he talks a lot about it. He loves to talk about it, but I guess the distinguishing characteristic of this purpose of living is that it's not just one prescriptive purpose that fits all. It's like, so what is Nietzsche's moral philosophy. It's a very general question, but what's the impression that you guys get in terms of the spectrum? Is he being nihilistic? Does he actually support the existence of moral institutions? What is his view on good and evil?

Caroline: I think he doesn't really like moral institutions, is what I kind of got from one of the chapters. I think he was slandering moral teachings, right?

Michael: Yeah, he loves slandering moral teachings. Have you guys read him saying God is dead?

Kolb: Yeah, so we did that at SSHI altogether.

Michael: Oh, you guys did that?

Kolb: Yeah, we did 'On the Genealogy of Morals.'

Kolb: Yeah, he's the ubermensch guy, so.

Michael: Yeah, wait how were you guys doing genealogy of morals? Like did you get to the part where he was kind of debunking good and evil as social constructors?

Kolb: Yeah, I think so. They talked about it because that's like the really major thing.

Michael: Yeah, I mean, if you factor that in, you read the Gay Science side by side with that, then well, it's just that. And kind of just returning to what is the purpose in Nietzsche, it's not really a moral relativism that he advocates. I've always thought of it as like, he's essentially encouraging everyone to forge their own morals.

Caroline: Yeah it's like "Self-Reliance."

Myles: I don't like that. I think it's dumb.

Kolb: Wait can you say why you think it's dumb? I really want to know.

Myles: Because I think that religion provides people with a moral framework that is generally good from what I've seen. I think that's important to have and then from that you can create your own morals.

Helen: Didn't he say like forgiveness was just for people who can't take revenge?

Kolb: Yeah, I was curious to, what– yeah, no, go ahead. Go ahead.

Michael: I mean, does religion provide people with an acceptable framework? Does anything provide anyone with an acceptable framework to kind of construct their own morals by?

Caroline: Well, I would question what, what is the meaning of like your own morals? I feel like, morals are, I guess social constructs. Because, take religion. I guess humans can shape whatever morals that we propose through the times. So like, the teachings of some type of religion can develop over time, based on how society develops and how people change their ways of thinking. It reminds me of social compulsive forces so it's like this network of tension between society and humans. So humans can affect conditions in society, but to some extent like society will have to… like be in this, endless interlocked network of tension.

Michael: Yeah it's also organic right in that it's really not static it's always experiencing upheaval and change. I guess, so God is dead, is Nietzsche's very, very clear denunciation of religion and the moral framework that it provides. I think generally, in response to Myles' question about isn't religion just normally sufficient for us to construct a moral

framework out of, I think in Emerson's time it would have been sufficient, I think, whatever, I guess, denomination, there are quite a lot of just very laid-back denominations in America right now that are just satisfactory in this regard.
But I think in Nietzsche's time, God is dead; he was kind of making a clear statement. that kind of the values of religion had expired. And this was partially also due to social change.

Caroline: But I think he also leans on the idea of God when he is talking about his teaching. He's not diverging entirely from his idea of God, about God.

Michael: Well, he refers to God, but…

Caroline: I don't think he just, I mean, he doesn't just refer to God, I think he–

Junyi: I think he refers to God, in the sense that he thinks religion has boxed in humanity and like religion is forcing people to believe. For example, Christianity thinks people can only live through suffering and that like boxes humanity to live in a certain way. But then he obviously thinks that there is no correct way to live. So then religion has become like a construct that we have to abide by and there's like this herd mentality.

Caroline: Yeah, yeah herd mentality. I thought of that when I was reading.

Michael: But I guess um I guess returning to what you said. Why would there, I guess my question would be why there would be a reason for him to diverge from God?

Caroline: Like why is there a reason for him to do so?

Michael: Yeah, I mean God as a cultural figure is God. Or we might not be talking about the same thing.

Kolb: Well, it's too controlling, right? That's the issue, right? Like it just doesn't allow for people to, like with what he said at the case, and if he wants everyone to have a different meaning society, then they can't all follow the same moral framework. And they can't, and yeah, religion's too limiting for that.

Michael: I mean, we might not agree with it now. I mean, religion has changed a lot, I guess, from since then, Vatican conferences and all. I mean, back then, like, in just where

you should live, you still had to pay a tenth of your earnings to the Roman Catholic Church. And I mean…

Caroline: Didn't he retreat into the mountains or something?

Michael: Yeah, Switzerland and Italy, emphasis on Italy, But that's not the point. I guess the point is that religion is just a blanket topic. I mean it can just be… you can have hippie religion, but you can have the Spanish Inquisition and I mean what Nietzsche talks about is more Spanish Inquisition type religion.

Kolb: I mean, I think even if you think that religion Isn't as limiting now. I mean just to some extent you're going to want to create your own denomination to match your own moral values like, that's still considered rebellion, right? So I don't think it's necessarily; like religion doesn't exist so you can reform it, it exists so you can follow it.

Michael: Yeah

Caroline: That does make sense I guess, he is saying that tradition is like a bane to society or not, because I remember in one of the chapters, he talks about tradition in a sense that it's good to stay with tradition. But if he's also, if he's also saying that religion is limiting and we should kind of like not follow the original social cultural constructs, then wouldn't that be contradictory or I may just be reading the first part wrong?

Michael: Maybe we should go to the chapter.

Caroline: I think it was chapter four, he talks about what preserves the species. And then in the middle, he says,

Michael: Let me. He says what is new, however, is under all circumstances evil bring that which wants to conquer to overthrow the old boundary stones and pieties and only what is old is good. I think that that's almost mocking no like yeah that's what i was thinking i was like is does he actually believe this or is he being satirical and trying to like like take on the hat of like the evil people that yes i think i think their exclamation marks are so satirical um i mean he's writing in the context of european conservatism like they were literally so he's mocking anti-revolutionism um and we know that we don't even have to know history to know that i guess we just to know that he doesn't recognize good and evil in order to see that um yeah he doesn't recognize.

Caroline: Good and evil, but he also uses those ideas to present his ideas. Well, I guess I think he's only using them.

Michael: Okay, he doesn't recognize good and evil as an correct statement. He has to recognize it too. He recognizes it in so far as that he recognizes that their social constructs, but he doesn't recognize them as, you know, absolute unconditional values, because as we've seen, he shows the values are prone to change. So what does that mean? I guess that means really, it doesn't mean anything more. and the fact that he's just challenging this particular preconception of new evil, old good, and he's pointing out that evil and good are just names that we attach to non-permanent concepts on us.

Kolb: Yeah. Yeah.

Caroline: So returning to your question. Although, like, I still feel like, um, what that makes me think about is, again, Emerson, like when in his essay on Self-Reliance, he does, he does try to go against, like, the old and proposes like a new way of thinking, but he also, like, leans on our traditional ways of thought. And Nietzsche also does that. I feel like I want they're like how much how much Nietzsche is actually, how much of Nietzsche is like his own thought.

Michael: How much of Nietzsche is like his own thought?

Caroline: Yeah. But like maybe I’m overreaching.

Michael: But no, I don't think you are.

Caroline: Because like Emerson like he talks about, oh we have to like think for ourselves, we can't like follow like the old ancient writers and thinkers that we proclaim are like the best. But I feel like Nietzsche is like, okay yeah I agree with Emerson but like I'm just not…

Michael: It connects, I guess it connects back to like what we were saying about like, is what Nietzsche is saying, novel.

Caroline: Yeah.

Michael: In that case, I'll just express my thoughts. I think that, I think you're justified in saying that. Emerson doesn't do a good job of staying true to his, you know, his, you know, advancement of Self-Reliance, strictly because, well, first of all, his national agenda, and second of all, his reliance on traditions. So what extent Nietzsche himself relies on traditions? I think that requires more evidence than we could have time for. But, so, I think I'll present some, his, I think there's a distinction to be made between kind of working entirely within a tradition, for example, the biblical Christian theological tradition and working against the grain of the tradition.

Like, so yes, I'm going to use references to Jesus Christ or references to, I'm going to discuss Jesus Christ and go into the justice of God. I'm going to criticize the church, but I'm not going to really align with that. And I think the latter is what Nietzsche is doing as in these more subverting values than expressing alignment with them. And he not only does that to Christianity, does that to Greek philosophy, essentially a Greek philosopher. He has very radical opinions on suffering. He doesn't like Socrates, or Plato for that matter, he does not like Kant, he does not like King. That's right. I know, you know, whom he expresses admiration for. He has models too. I guess he cannot call him the original, he's also an emulator. But according to Aristotle, all art is my thesis. It's, I mean, I think there's, it's very hard to, you know, it's easy to disqualify people as being not original, because there's so little room for originality to shine through. It's not like, just, it's in between the lines, I think. And like back to his models, his models are Euripides, an ancient Greek tragic playwright and a cricket Wagner who was a very radical composer at the time. So right at the Valkyries guy, Wagner. But essentially I think he doesn't really idolise philosophers, so first he idolises playwrights, musicians, artists. I guess that does say something about Nietzsche versus Emerson.

Caroline: Do think that Nietzsche, like he talks about how people are instruments…

Michael: Like part five.

Caroline: Yeah and I guess like part one and one of the later parts. Do you think that he's also taking on this role? It's like he refers to it as I think like the submissive role in like the broad lenses of society.

Michael: I think he's mocking the submissive role, what do you guys think.

Kolb: Yeah I think that's what Professor Bobonich said, it wasn't anyone who wasn't an ubermensch is one basically. Yeah I mean um in this context.

Caroline: Like what is he asking? What is he taking the role of?

Kolb: He is… an ubermensch. I don't know. I'm assuming he's like writing this. He's living by his own role.

Michael: Caroline just touched on a very contentious point in ancient scholarship. Like how does he conceive himself? Because this is where you have to get into like the ego of him as you know because he's not exactly, he writes books like why I write such good books but he's not very self-confident to be honest.

Kolb: Wait why is that not being self-confident?

Michael: I mean, he had, he wouldn't be the one to call himself an ubermensch. He had eye problems, he had health problems for the majority of his life, he probably had syphilis too. But he was physically infirm like 10 years before he died. He broke down because he was so infirmed. I think everyone knows, or Professor Bobonich told you guys the story of him having like hugged a horse and cried and stuff right? Essentially a horse is being whipped, he broke down crying he called it oh my brother. He went insane and this is his destiny to take care of and put the rest of all that.

Caroline: That's so funny of him though.

Kolb: It's a, like, very tragic moment, um, it's, like, it's like a kind of an insecurity, but you can also say, like, yeah, if he's going to be, if it seems to us, it's like a rational that he's feeling that over the horse, then that is his own moral framework.

Michael: Why? I feel like we could argue about this.

Caroline: I feel like that connects back to his point on, like, reason versus sense, like being emotional over being logical. Like, yeah, I think, is he a proponent of the logical side? Is he really?

Michael: Oh. Okay. That's…

Kolb: No. I don't think so.

Michael: He's not an opponent of either. Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

Kolb: He's just saying that the emotional side is underrated.

Michael: Yeah, yeah, um, but it really, his, okay, I'm not sure if this is his ideal in art as he lays out in the birth of tragedy is that both, like you have to have both, he can't have the logical because that's inauthentic. So he calls it the Apollonian and the Dionysian, if that rings a bell.

Caroline: I feel like he emphasizes like the reason part a lot more though. For the betterment of society. talks about the advancement of science. And all that. Let me try to pull up this, the chapter.

Kolb: Wait, I need to kind of be gone for like a minute.

Caroline: Okay, um, I think, and yeah, in chapter 12, he talks about the aim of science. But in that, oh, I really like the last part of that chapter. Like, it might yet be found to be the great giver of pain. And then his counterforce might at the same time be found. It's immense capacity for letting new galaxies of joy flare up. Like, I really like that sentence. Um, wait, I really like that one chapter, um, where he talks about like the volcano, the eruption. Like, I love that. It was, wait, let me, let me try to read it. Okay. It's countless things that humanity acquired in earlier stages, but so feebly and embryonically that no one could tell that had been acquired suddenly emerged into the light much later, perhaps after centuries. Meanwhile they have become strong and ripe, and then he says, all of us harbor in ourselves, hidden gardens and plantations, and to use another metaphor, we are all growing volcanoes approaching their hour of eruption. How near or distant that is, of course, nobody knows, not even a good lord. I feel like that's very beautiful.

Myles: Well, he uses the volcano as like a metaphor for like power, right?

Michael: Yeah, power is a, I mean, you could talk about it more, you could summarize it more and far away that power, but power is the general direction, I think.

Caroline: He has some interesting thoughts on power, I think, um, like, like power and, and pleasure and pain, how they're all, like, interlaced, um, so he's saying that like, like emotion or, I guess, like, compassion is, is a virtue that everyone needs, right?

Kolb: Which chapter is this?

Caroline: I think chapter 13, 13, on the doctrine of the feeling of power. And then I guess 12, because he talks about, like, pain and pleasure there.

Kolb: There's, I'm here. I think. Okay.

Michael: Is he praising compassion here?

Kolb: Maybe not. I feel like he's vilified both sides. Because if everything is just power, it's just exercising power. It should be nice towards someone that's just proving that you already have power. It won't harm you to be nice to them. Is he really saying that?

Michael: Well, he's partially certain that you don't.

Caroline: I don't know, like what is the one of the later chapters after that, like 15 from a distance? And he talks about like, like, what is he really saying that, that short?

Michael: I don't think it's that related to what we've been talking about, um, he's saying that, um, well, okay, I put this in a way that doesn't just be phrased, what he's saying. Um, um, he's saying that some people are. really living under a, or living behind a facade would, I think that's the, that kind of encapsulates what he's trying to say that he's, that some people have a pretense of whatever this is grandeur of power even that really crumbles once you actually close the sense of distance between them.

Caroline: And does that connect back to like the next chapter like over the footbridge talks about like

Michael: He talks about how really fraternity. I would say… Yes, it does, but only if it's tangentially so. So I wouldn't go as far as to propose any kind of logical order between the passages in any way. They're all self-contained and there's not really any progression.

Kolb: No, but progression would be too logical.

Caroline: No, I feel like he has like, it's just like a dump of his thoughts like we're reading. Yeah, mind.

Michael: Okay, we're back to power and power. And whether, you know, is looking down on compassion? Is he looking up to power?

Caroline: I don't think he's necessarily looking. Okay, so what is this position of compassion?

Michael: On compassion?

Caroline: Wait, say that again.

Michael: I mean, you voiced the opinion that it's... Well, he's praising compassion. But Kolb says he's mocking compassion. I thought it was...

Kolb: Compassion is...

Helen: Oh, go ahead.

Kolb: Yeah, wait, no, sorry, you can speak.

Helen: I thought it was like he's saying you're compassionate for your own personal game. Like you help someone else because they'll join your cause and realize how great power is. Yeah.

Caroline: Like, that also made me think about like, um, herd mentality. That was really good.

Kolb: And, and I'm also not saying that compassion is really bad. I think just saying he's, he's vilifying it. Like we might think that compassion is mostly altruistic. He's saying that compassion is like, it's just a show that you have power over them. And he's, and I think he's saying that both compassion and power are necessarily bad things and just that one leads to another. And from our perspective, thinking compassion with power would make it not seem so compassionate, except that not be the case from his moral framework.

Caroline: So compassion is like an instrument for power.

Kolb: Power is an instrument for, no, wasn't an instrument because you wouldn't, I want power just for the compassion. Compassion is a result of power.

Myles: I don't agree with that.

Caroline: Explain.

Myles: I don't really want to bring up like an extreme example, but like…

Caroline: You should.

Kolb: Go for it.

Myles: I would rather not, but like two people in like a completely powerless situation can still give compassion to one another and you know, they don't have power so I mean the point is like…

Kolb: Okay, so I think if you were really poor and another really really poor person came up to you and asked you for money, you wouldn't give them the money because you need that money to accept if they know.

Myles: I disagree.

Kolb: you would give them if you had a if you wouldn't be able to feed yourself for the day and you had one piece of bread and they asked you for you bread you would give it to them.

Myles: I mean, you know, it depends on circumstances, but I don't… Maybe you can bring up something like love if you truly love someone you'll do something you'll sacrifice something so in that instance, maybe.

Caroline: He does talk about love here.

Kolb: What was the passage on love?

Caroline: 14, I'll pull it up. Back to the compassion and power part, I feel like he's saying that um either way like if you have compassion like when there is compassion in the play in the works, power will be involved.

Kolb: Yeah and and to like finish my example, if like you, you might not give me just a bit of an institution, Myles, you might but like I'm sorry I'm not as good of person as you but um like on the other hand if you were like a billionaire and someone asked you for a piece of bread you would absolutely give it to them and you would seem like a much nicer person except it just means you have more power to do give that compassion.

Caroline: That makes sense yeah.

Myles: I believe you can still sacrifice without having power.

Caroline: Well the extent of power…

Kolb: From the most extreme case, you can't sacrifice, you don't have anything to sacrifice ,if you're already dead and that's like the position of like the least power. If you were lying on your deathbed in the hospital, you wouldn't have anything to sacrifice either except maybe…

Helen: Maybe your will, I think I'll leave my property to so and so.

Caroline: So then you'd have power.

Kolb: Taking this strictly philosophical sense no because you wouldn't be able to like if you were literally like i don't know in a vegetated state you wouldn't be able to like it's promising when you wouldn't be able to give consent to anyone getting your money or you wouldn't be able to like amend your will that's still no power but we're talking about strictly philosophical.

Myles: So you're saying having something is power?

Kolb: Yeah, I don't think you're just as opposed to that specifically yeah.

Myles: In the case of the will, you know having property is power, which I mean I guess it is.

Kolb: But you can't give the compassion because you don't have the ability to like right if if you if you wrote your will in a state where you were enough physically to write, then that's you having the power, that's you having more power than you if you were on your deathbed. If you're on your deathbed, you wouldn't have the ability to write your will or to amend it. So that's that piece of compassion that you've given in your will was from back when you had power.

Caroline: That does make sense. He also talks about love and power and property.

Michael: We're ending soon, aren't we?

Caroline: Yeah, we are. It's very unfortunate because I feel like we're at the peak of our discussion. He was like, Nietzsche, we're just reading his mind up, it's kind of like all over the place. It's like there's a lot to talk about and it's like, oh, but I think next time though, the professor might come. He's going to let me know when, but fingers crossed, so, all right, guys.

Michae: Wait what do you guys make of the line, pity is praised as the virtue of prostitutes.

Caroline: I think you may just end us with that line.

Kolb: We can talk about it in the chat.

Conclusion

In this meeting, we call attention to Nietzsche's aphorisms in the context of our everyday life and other writers and philosophers like Ralph Waldo Emerson. We find truths in his views on morality, conscience, and social-human theory. Indeed, the world seems to be moving at a rapid, relentless pace, herd-mentality dictates many of our beliefs and actions, and there are hidden motives behind portraying compassion and sacrifice. We analyzed his nuanced perspective on human progress and his relationship with religion (and his famous declaration, "God is dead!"), and also debated about whether power was necessary for compassion. His ideas were not entirely novel to us, but we enjoyed his entertaining, oftentimes satirical, style — each section is like a personal diary entry, a doorway to his thoughts, to which we could dip or delve into.

Attendees

Andrew
Caroline
Helen
Junyi
Kolb
Lihi
Michael
Myles