

Journal 2/3

Nietzsche Day 2

For day two of studying Friedrich Nietzsche, we read from the Solomon anthology an excerpt from *The Gay Science*. In this passage, there were several quotes I wanted to highlight and discuss. First, the madman says, “I have come too early,” he goes on to specify that “the light of the stars requires time”. I believe in these quotes; the madman is acknowledging the time humans require to change. When Nietzsche was writing, Darwin’s work was still a new concept. Many people are slow to change their beliefs, and like how a star’s light takes years to reach our eyes, the world is not ready to understand that Darwin is correct, and God is dead. Nietzsche also describes how “even we born guessers of riddles”.

I remember as a child often asking my parents, why is the sky blue? Where did people come from? What is beyond the Earth in space? When does the universe end? To these questions my parents said we had no answers, and I believed them. I believed from a young age that there were certain questions about human existence that no one had an answer to. Religion gave an answer to many of these questions, and Nietzsche thought that as God was deemed unnecessary with Darwinism taking its place, that “at long last the horizon appears free to us”. The unanswerable questions are ours to answer again. He describes it as an “open sea”. Endless, wide, clear for miles, and while it is unknown what is below the surface, no one can deny its objective beauty. As Nietzsche describes earlier in the text, “some sun seems to have set and some ancient and profound trust has been turned into doubt; to them our old world must appear daily more like evening, more mistrustful, stranger, ‘older.’” To those who fully believe in God, the life of someone who does not must appear dark and hopeless. However, since the concept of God is so abstract,

the level of understanding of the universe and its mechanisms is the same whether you believe in God or not. The unknown is just as vast.

Today's journal entry also covers the posted excerpt from Wallace Stevens. Stevens describes how historically; religions have morphed from one to another. Gods have changed and so have the practices to worship those gods, however, in modern times rather than changing gods, they have become nonexistent. As Stevens writes, "It is not as if they had gone over the horizon to disappear for a time; nor as if they had been overcome by other gods or greater power and profounder knowledge. It is simply that they all came to nothing." However, he also remarks that while the idea of gods is gone, they will not be forgotten to history. From Stevens, "they were not forgotten because they had been a part of the glory of the earth. At the same time, no man ever muttered a petition in his heart for the restoration of those unreal shapes." Lastly, the author acknowledges that it is not easy to accept the death of gods. It marks the transition of humans to disbelief, and quite literally the end of an era. Written by Stevens as, "'to speak of the origin and the end of gods is not a light matter. It is to speak of the origin and the end of eras of human belief... In the age of disbelief'".