

Essay on a dialogue between larry king and neitzsche

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LARRY: Hello, and welcome to Larry King Live. Tonight, I have here with me acclaimed German philosopher and author Freidrich Nietzsche. Thank you for being here.

NEITZSCHE: I am here because I am, nothing more.

LARRY: Fantastic. Now, I understand you attended the Beijing Olympics recently, and you saw many of the events there.

NEITZSCHE: Well, Larry, I went to the games, indeed. I watched the opening ceremonies, with thousands of Chinese acrobats, dancers and athletes creating a seamless presentation that flowed with life, but I found myself not finding any intrinsic value in it.

< LARRY: I see. Well, what did you think of the gold medal winners?

NEITZSCHE: While I normally attribute my philosophy to not placing real objective value in anything, I do appreciate the search for the Ubermensch.

LARRY: Expand on that.

NEITZSCHE: The Ubermensch is what I call the 'overman,' 'supreme being,' what have you. It is the ideal to which humanity should set for itself. The Ubermensch, or superman, is more than just an ideal for physical prowess, but that is a large part of it. The Olympics, every four years, sets out to advance the next generation of humanity, which I believe is the one goal humanity can really have for itself. With each new ceremony, people from all over the world train harder and harder in order to beat records, advance human exceptionalism, perform better than anyone ever has before. If all

humanity can keep working toward this goal, the Ubermensch cannot be too far away.

LARRY: Why, in your opinion, do we emphasize athletic performance at this level?

NEITZSCHE: Larry, it all has to do with what I call the 'will to power.' Basically, we all have a will to live, but this is far different. It is not enough just to live - we have to work and excel. Survival, for humans, cannot make us sufficiently happy. It is necessary for us to acquire power as well. What is one of the ways in which we can gain power? Through athletic ability and physicality. If we can grow strong, fast, powerful, we can overpower our lessers. While Olympic athletes may not think of it in these terms, it is the ultimate goal of the strong human to have power over the weak.

LARRY: Even when it risks our lives? Athletes hurt themselves every day - pulling ankles, breaking bones...

NEITZSCHE: And gaining power. Animals risk their lives all the time in order to get power over another; competition is inherent in our nature. Competitive athletics, such as the Olympics, are just another way to exert control over someone else, as with warfare and the like.

LARRY: What, do you imagine, the ultimate point of the Olympics is?

NEITZSCHE: There is no point, Larry, not in the end. God is dead, after all. There are many ways to look at it in this way, but the primary one is through nihilism. Due to the finite nature of our existence, none of our

accomplishments or contributions to the universe really matter. There are no necessary rules to society, life, and our behavior, and as such the Olympics and any other activity are entirely meaningless. Any significance it has for us is injected entirely from our own search for purpose. I call this perspectivism.

LARRY: Very interesting. Any other thoughts on why you don't think the Olympics matter in the long run?

NEITZSCHE: In fact, Larry, I do. One other thing I think about often is something that chills me to the bone - this is the idea of eternal return, or eternal recurrence. See, I believe that the universe happens in a recursive loop - everything has happened before, and it will happen again. I will get up in the morning again, I will have this conversation with you again, the Olympics will happen over and over again. In fact, all of these things have already occurred many times before as well. It is a frightening thought to me, but it falls in with my belief that there is no real meaning to anything - pure nihilism. If it all will happen again the same way, regardless of outcome, what is the point of trying to change yourself?

LARRY: Enlightening. Well, that's about all the time we have. Thank you so much for being on the show, Friedrich.

NEITZSCHE: Do not thank me. It makes no difference in the end.

LARRY: Delightful. Have a good night.