

Chapter 22: Zarathustra, Marriage and Children: Conversation about and with a liminal web family

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(Daniel and Michelle Garner)

Cadell: I have the privilege of sharing a discursive space with O.G. Rose, the creative team composed of Daniel and Michelle Garner, who also happen to be married and with children. They really connect, not only the creation of new life, but also the artistic and intellectual creations, into a unique spiritual organisation. I know I find their work as a whole to be inspiring, and I know that a lot of people in our networks find their work to be inspiring.

This conversation is organised towards an anthology titled “Spiritual Leadership for Our Time,” which is itself inspired by deeper readings of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and to connect the O.G. Rose phenomena to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, might open up some really interesting ideas. Zarathustra does have a lot to say about the family. However, the ideas that he develops are often not expanded upon and extended in the context of the modern day family. Considering that the O.G. Rose phenomena does expand and extend the idea of family in the modern context, I think a dialogue here will be extremely fruitful.

My first question for you both is in relation to how I've taught *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where it seems to me, the central concept, or one of the central concepts, involves the three metamorphoses of the camel, the lion, and the

child.⁴⁸⁹ These three metamorphoses are first introduced in “The Speeches of Zarathustra,” and they go on to structure the narrative of the text right up until the very end. Now, while Zarathustra does not explicitly connect this model to starting, building, and maintaining a family, inclusive of sexual difference, child bearing and rearing, it seems to me that there are some interesting connections where it might be useful to speculate on how that might be thought, philosophically. So my first question is: how do you both imagine how the three metamorphoses might be thought in connection with thinking about family life?⁴⁹⁰

Michelle: First of all, we are happy and honoured to be speaking with you, and thank you so much for your kind words; we are thrilled to be here. So that’s a great question. I think about the three transformations with Zarathustra, and they resonate with me as a wife and a mother. For me, and it’s straightforward, but I think about the camel, and I think about the heavy burden. I think about actual pregnancy itself.

In the context of my life, Daniel and I were married, and then like four months later we were expecting a baby. So very soon after we got married we’re having a baby. It was a surprise, and it was scary, but also very exciting. And I will say that it’s a whole different ball game when you are suddenly carrying the life of another human being. There is something very existential about that.

As it relates to the existential dimension of taking care of other human lives, and relating it to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the three metamorphoses, it adds

⁴⁸⁹ As also explored extensively in this anthology by other thinkers, for example: James Wisdom (Chapter 16), David Högberg and Filip Lundström (Chapter 17), and Michelle Garner (Interlude 7).

⁴⁹⁰ For another meditation on the potential utility of Nietzsche in thinking about family dynamics and the psyche, see Joris de Kelder’s contribution to this anthology (Chapter 21).

something beautiful to the reading, for me at least. I think Nietzsche as a philosopher had deep insights about caring for the other, even if he was not married and never became a father. I think he had desires for that in a way. I think he believed very strongly in deep care for the other, and consequently I think he had insights into that. Of course, he was a creative thinker, and I think someone who engages creative pursuits is a lot like a mother, or a parent, because you understand what it's like to suddenly carry something that's bigger than yourself and beyond yourself. Moreover, there is this idea of gestation and then birthing, and it looks so peculiar and unusual. What is strange is that it is even hard to relate to what you yourself made, because it doesn't speak the language you speak.

So for me, I'll just put it like that, the camel is pregnancy. It is suddenly taking upon this burden of just literally growing a hump. But it's funny because it's not a burden on your back but a burden on your front. You look at it directly. It is there. It is in your body, you carry it. And so it's very vivid and connected to the camel. Now the body is beautifully designed, and it carries well, but the burden is more of an existential burden that is very, very heavy. That is where it is really heavy. Especially in our context, with our first child being a surprise. The feeling is like 'oh my gosh, I really don't feel ready for this, I just don't feel ready for this.' And yet when we married, we knew that a child would be a part of our life as a part of the fullness of marriage. So in a sense we were open to it, and in that sense ready.

But what is great about Nietzsche is that he often encourages us to make ourselves ready by doing that which we're not ready for. And I think he's really inspiring to me in that way, and how he writes and what he inspires us and encourages us to do. So that's the camel.

Now if we go to the lion real quick. The lion to me is like the roar of birth. I mean for me all my labours were natural. So it's like this roaring, this super uncomfortable, painful, yet miraculous moment of birth. The roar of the birth pains. And then you birth the child and you hold the child and you're just weeping. And there's a sense of victory, but you're also extremely vulnerable.

Nietzsche will describe the lion as out in the wilderness. The lion is a mighty creature, but it's also alone, and has to fend for itself. I think there's something about motherhood being solitary in that way. Nobody else can experience labour. Nobody else can experience what it's like to nurse your child on your own breast, to take care of your child, to know them intimately. They're like your own flesh, and yet they're their own being. And so I think there's something about this that makes me resonate with the solitariness of the lion in that.

And I think that resonates with other things in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: the solitude, and how you have to find your home in solitude, and things like that. Because it's weird, it's such a paradoxical thing when you have children. You have these other beings and yet it's quite lonely in a deep way. But it's kind of a beautiful loneliness that you can convert into solitude if you understand the creative process that you are in and that you get to be a witness to the extension of life and the continuation of life, and holding space for the difference of your children, and their personalities, and you also have to hold space for the difference of your husband.

I guess for me the lion is also important because a lot of the lion's freedom depends on giving others freedom. Suddenly I think in the context of family, now it is not just freedom in yourself, or to your own autonomy. You have to somehow learn to be free as you are tethered to the family

system. And that's a very strange place of tension. But I think we can think about this in a Hegelian way, because there is a way for a sublation of that autonomous freedom in the family, by way of an earned freedom. You have to realise that your freedom is highly dependent on giving freedom to those around you. I experience that practically by homeschooling, because I homeschool the kids. I give them a lot of freedom to pursue their own interests. What they're interested in, what they're passionate about, all of that, you have to hold that space, and kindle for those fires that are already within the children.

The last one, the child: the child is actually the children, literally.⁴⁹¹ Having children reminds me each and every day to revive my sense of wonder, to question my own self, to question what I think we should do and all of that. There's so many emotions that get stirred up again by the child, and you know, the fun and wonder of little miraculous things, like pretending to be a turtle, for example. I mean there are just these little things that are so miraculous, this incredible sense of wonder, this sense of innocence. The child really is this spontaneous interest as a perpetual wheel.

Maybe unfortunately the education system doesn't always acknowledge that because you should be doing something more formal and practical. You should be doing your maths homework, or whatever. And there's a place for maths and everything like that, and doing your homework in a formal and practical sense. But you know why not figure out a way to see the fact that, if the child spontaneously has an interest in programming, or computer games, you can see how it relates to maths. Because there is a lot of maths in programming and computer games.

⁴⁹¹ For a deeper meditation on the concept of the Child, see Dimitri Crooijmans contribution to this anthology (Chapter 7).

My point is that if you take a different approach, instead of shutting down that creative energy, you can actually find that the children will want to do maths on their own because of the way you can encourage, or kindle the fire of that natural intrinsic desire.⁴⁹² So the child for me is like the actual child, to have children you have to become a child again, you have to connect and get on their level, and understand what they're trying to say. And then you also just see the world through their eyes. You see it like, 'Oh wow, I thought puddles were cool, but now I see they are amazing,' because the kids are just having so much fun in a puddle, without thinking about getting dirty or wet. They are just having fun with it. And then we clean off afterwards. So you know, just kind of getting outside of your functional fixedness by taking a different route around the house or walking through the woods in a different way just because why not, you know? It's a total exploration. It is all a beautiful discovery.

I have always loved children, but in having children, you see this incredible power in them. I love their curiosity and their curiosity makes me curious too. So anyways, I think that's kind of the way these three transformations might relate in a practical way to being a mother and wife.

Daniel: Beautiful response, thank you Michelle. And again, Cadell, thank you for having us. It's always a delight to speak with you, and thank you for your work. The transformations of Zarathustra bring up a very interesting triad, if I were to put it very generally, of bearing, fighting, creating. You know the lion is also going to be fighting the gold dragon. What is most interesting is that all human beings, whether 5 years old, 40 years old, 60 years old...we all have a tendency to be childish, not childlike.

⁴⁹² For reflections on a mode of education inspired by Zarathustra, see Jyoti Dalal's paper in this anthology (Chapter 13).

Those three metamorphoses are a movement from being childish to being childlike, and in examining, as Michelle said, children themselves, they can actually help us to see the glimmers of childlikeness, not just childishness.

Now you could say that the last man is childish, right? The last man just wants to have their pleasures taken care of, childish. And so one of the things that's very important is that if you don't have all three stages of the metamorphosis, you have a problem. So let's say you're a camel, and you're bearing something, but you're just bearing the values of the nation, or the values of the market.⁴⁹³ Ok, well, you're a camel, and that's better than, say, being childish, but the system might be playing you. Let's say you have the lion and you're fighting for certain values and what you believe, but you don't necessarily know how to implement them. Maybe you have a fight, but you don't have an idea of how to systematise victory. So then you may just have the French Revolution and tear stuff down and not know what you're going to do after the flames burn out. But then when you get to be the child as childlike, you're able to create your own values and to find wonder and value in those things that you make.

So I think as a parent, for example, you always want to be thinking about the whole metamorphosis when you're raising children. Like, you want them to learn to bear and fight for something they value, as opposed to saying, 'Hey, let's go out and do stuff you don't want to do, because it's good to be a camel.' You know, you can teach them to be a camel, but if it's in the context of, say, overly-weeding the garden, or picking up rocks for no reason, or different things, it's like, yeah, they're learning how to bear, but they're not learning how to bear something in the context of something they value.

⁴⁹³ This brings us to Samuel Barnes' line of questioning at the end of "Can You Invent a Deity?" (see: Chapter 20).

Now don't get me wrong, we had to take the tarps off the garden the other day: there is a time to do things you don't want to do, which can actually train you to have grit, and I do think Nietzsche is a philosopher of grit. You need grit to get through things, but you always want to be thinking about the whole. So the kid can be fighting for something and doing what they believe in, but what if they are fighting for, and believing in, watching Netflix all the time? They're fighting, but it's for Netflix. So you know, they're learning to be a lion, but it's not in the context of something they are creating.

So a big thing for the metamorphoses is thinking of the whole thing. Because once you get to the child, you know, the child has in him, kind of sublimated, the camel and the lion. Those are not left behind. They're part of, they come into the child. The child is also going to be situated within Nietzsche's ethical system as part of the master morality. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche discusses the difference between slave morality and master morality. Now a lot of people think he is talking about the difference between master and slave, and yes he is, but he's also talking about an entirely different ethical system.

Now a master ethical system is one that sees things in terms of noble and contemptible, whereas slave morality is one where we see things in terms of good and evil.⁴⁹⁴ And so it's very important when Nietzsche says go beyond good and evil that we understand that he's not saying go off into hedonistic whatever, but rather he's saying go into noble ethics, like an ethical system of nobility, which is the ability to see something as valuable by your own standard. Like he talks about in *Beyond Good and Evil*, that what is noble is what the noble class sees as good for them. And it's not

⁴⁹⁴ As also stressed in Daniel Garner's article "The Overman and the Allegory of the Cave" (see: Chapter 2).

an arrogant thing. It's that they are actually the standard of nobility. It's kind of just facticity, right? Like it is good, say, to be beautiful or to be honourable. Therefore if something contributes to beauty and honour, then that is noble.

So the reason Nietzsche really pushes the master morality is because he's very concerned that good is usually used as the opposite of evil, which is to say it does not have substance in and of itself; it's just the negative. Like it's good not to steal, it's good not to lie. Well ok, that's fine. But that's all negative. And you see, if you can't take the step of positing a positive good, well then you're always going to be trapped avoiding what's evil, but you're not necessarily going to move into doing something that's noble or good in and of itself, per se.

But of course, who decides what's good in and of itself? That's where you get the child. And what's so interesting with children is that they literally can see a toy truck and can be like, 'that's good.' A child digs a hole behind the garage, and says that's good. And by good in that context, I mean worth doing. There is a value in it. You know, the child doesn't ask 'how much money am I going to make?' 'How much am I going to get out of it?' They are more like 'this is good to do in and for itself.' And that seems to be one of the keys. I would say, as parents, that what we're focused on, cultivating intrinsic motivation. Michelle and I talk about intrinsic motivation all the time. We talk about creating an environment where the child could be intrinsically motivated. But since they have to also bring in the camel and the lion, it's not a cheap just doing what you want to do; it's also that you have to bear and fight. You have to dig the hole in the garage; you have to learn how to use the tools. There is work in this.

Now if I were once again being very general, I kind of think of the last man as 'want,' and the overman as 'will.'

You know the last man has a whole lot of want, whereas the overman is big on will. Will seems to be something where, starting off in the childishness of want, starts to go through the crucible per se of the camel and the lion, and then can manifest into the child that wills, the will to power, the will to manifest, and you just see that naturally in children. So the question I think for parents is how to create an environment that keeps that alive. How to create an environment that cultivates that, and makes that a reality. That would also mean, since children tend to do what their parents are doing, that means you as parents are also responsible for living that way. Because if you're not living as Nietzsche's children, why should they? You have to figure that out.

Cadell: Fantastic. There is so much to think about there. Michelle, the way you described the entire process of pregnancy through these three metamorphoses, I think this is so helpful metaphorically, that we have a strong idea for that entire process. And I think it maps so nicely. And then I also think that connects well to Daniel's brilliant description of how to think of these three metamorphoses as a sublimated whole.

Now just to quickly respond to the last point Daniel made about the way children mimic parents: why would children behave like the sublimated overman if the parents are not? I always thought that it's alright for children not to know what it's like to be an adult, because they've never experienced it, but it's not ok for adults to not know how children are going to be perceiving them. Because we have a duty to remember what it was like when we were that age, and the type of being that we would have liked to have had as a model for our own action and our development.

Moving to the next question. There are many people today who approach the dimensions that Michelle was talking about with pregnancy, you know the risk involved, of trying to be ready for what you are not ready for and maybe cannot be ready for. Or it could be related to approaching marriage, the risk involved in feeling like you're not ready for that type of commitment and sacrifice. One of the dimensions that I think stands out here, is that people struggle to reconcile the passionate intensity of romance and sexuality, with the traversal of marriage and family building and having children. They feel like there is this trade-off and they don't want to give up on one for the other.

However, I think Nietzsche teaches extensively about how to transform and work with the deepest passions, in cultivating that intrinsic motivation as a sublimation, as opposed to repressing them or thinking that they are sinful. Nietzsche suggests that we should use the deepest passions to cultivate the highest virtues. So how do you think that this teaching specifically can help people start towards the path of family building and maintenance in the long term, while also keeping the intensity and passion alive, and the dynamic alive between man and woman?

Michelle: I think that's a great question. I think that it makes me think a little bit about the work itself. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the Fourth Part, he's on the mountain top for his Honey Sacrifice, and he's having like this ecstasy of solitude and it's over a long extended time. This is very climatic. You know, this is kind of like, sexually speaking, climatic. We could compare it to that. But at the same time it is not only an actual climax, he's going to take that climax and bring it down into the valley, towards the cries of despair, which are coming from his future spirit children. Here he is not trying to take that actual climax of the honey sacrifice into the valley, he is rather extending

the climax into a movement from the mountain to the valley, kind of like the climax as sacrifice encompasses also this downward motion.

In this way, children are kind of like a symbolic representation of an extended climax, of the fullness of the sexual experience, its potential. Of course, sexual experience does not always have the chance of conception, but the potential for children is always there. I think there's something about the fact that you have these living human beings that come from this passionate act. And then it's all built as an extension of the sexual act, like it's all related to sexuality in the creation of what comes from the fullness of that sexuality.

I don't know if it is something just biologically wired into us or something, but the transition from the sexual act to the creation of a child, as I've mentioned, is kind of a scary threshold to cross. But once it is crossed, there's something that makes you feel quite humbled by something larger than yourself. You feel excited and proud that that's something you've done in the fullness of sexuality, and created a human life. That human life will go on and be their own sort of individual and take on their own sort of expression. And so I think, for me, it's interesting because that fullness of the thing is always going to be thinking about sex as tied to something you're building and you're creating beyond sex.

This is important because I think it's the way of nature, and in a sense because Nietzsche does affirm this idea of creating something that's yours, that's uniquely yours, that maybe other people don't understand, and maybe other people won't understand. I think you have to know the risk, that there is a lot of suffering, you will encounter these huge emotions. I mean something that really resonates with Zarathustra too, when he talks about the mind should

be the entrails of the heart. You know, that's like a perfect expression of motherhood, and being a wife, and being a participant in a family. You experience these huge, huge explosions of your heart. This could be in sexuality, but also in giving birth and holding a child, and you just feel this rush of love like you've never experienced in your whole life. It's just otherworldly.

From these other worldly emotions, you are so irrational, you are willing to be up multiple times in the night, and nursing your children off of your own body. You know you do things that the rational mind claims are completely ridiculous, like why would you do that to yourself sort of thing, they're hard. You do these things willingly because you are committed and you are building something, and you care, and you love, and your heart is so exploding that it takes over your mind. You know you do things that are just, again, something irrational or non-rational, if we can say it like that.

In the context of creating something, of pouring into something, there's a place, there's a place for all of that pouring into. You know, there's this location of all the pouring into whether we can think about that sexually, or we can think about that in terms of the family you're making and so on. But it's difficult when you isolate sex separate from family. What is behind this is that sexuality has been severed from suffering in our culture. But the suffering is still going to be there. So it still crops up around sexuality in different ways. And I think that can sometimes be in someone trying to get their sexual pleasure but they're not able to commune with somebody really, and build a beautiful relationship that sustains all of the sexual acts.

I think we think of the institution of marriage as sexless, but this is not arguing for a sexless marriage, this is arguing for as much sex as you want, within marriage. And in the

past, if people knew you were going to be super horny at 16 or 18, you were encouraged to get married, and go have a lot of sex, you know. So I think that's really important because we so often think of it as like 'oh marriage is boring.' But we need to get creative with sexuality and marriage. Marriage is a place for sex.

We have silly ideas about sex and marriage, and it's strange because when we think of eating, we don't just think we can eat anything, or eat whatever we want all the time, like cake for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We don't because we understand the body needs certain nutrients, and it needs a certain relation to the land. At least we do, because Daniel and I live on a farm. So everything we eat is something we grow, and it's all tied to our locality and what we're building for the future, our legacy. In the same way, to me, I think it's weird to sever sexuality from the family because we just start to see it as a blind appetite, and it is in a way a very real blind appetite. But for that very reason we have to acknowledge it, we cannot see it as used for pure pleasure and satisfaction, where we can just use it in a way that is disconnected from suffering. I think here the balance is thrown off, and it's more about pleasure than it is about pain, too. But then there is this pain, because you get all of this frustration of missing out on something more which is within but beyond sex. I will always want more, I want this more-ness, that sex should be in the context of, if that makes sense.

I hope that speaks to the question. I think it's interesting to me because sex is very right in the marriage context with bearing children. I also think it's more realistic to real life, embedding sexuality in relation to other responsibilities that keep you from being in bed. You have these other responsibilities, but you still find time for sexuality, in that context, and that's wonderful, and it can be as much as you can possibly fit into your schedule. So it's just interesting

and funny to me that we have this traditional avenue for the expression of sexuality, which obviously can be challenged for sometimes good reasons, because sometimes it can be unfortunately a broken institution, or a broken type of relation. But in the good of it, you know, it's actually a very rich source for sexual expression.

Furthermore, when people test sexuality outside the confines of marriage, and say they want more sex, are they really having more sex? I mean it's interesting to be honest because if you think about certain nations like Japan and you start to get more digital sexual interactions, is that still the fullness of sexuality? Maybe it is, but I think in the context of the niche idea of sexuality creating something in fullness, it would also include this potential for creating something beyond yourself, and that's the potential for fertility and actual conception, and bearing children, and then continuing that sexual process within that.

Daniel: Very good, Michelle, very good. I would say in Nietzsche that there is no way of life that is necessarily better than any other way of life, because of a radical contingency, and I think you can connect him with Hegel here. So Nietzsche would not say that being single is necessarily better than being in a family, nor would he say that being in a family is necessarily better than being single. Now the issue is if you are in a social order that prides family and alienates people who are single, then Nietzsche might say there's a higher probability in that social setting that being single is going to be what you need to do to be an overman. But it is completely imaginable that in another social setting where all the values are on the side of individual realisation, that actually having a family would be the radical act. So there is a contextual element here. Also, we have to keep in mind that Nietzsche is writing before, say, birth control. Birth control changes the

social structure, for good and bad, but it changes things. We always have to think about that.

There is a dichotomy that people make between passion and getting married, as if that is the death of passion. Well, right there, that's very problematic. We have a paper titled '(W)hole Hope', which plays on — H.O.L.E — hope and 'Whole Hope' — W.H.O.L.E. Hole hope is where you have an absence of reality and you can imagine what you're going to do and what things could be in that hole and so forth. And it is very, very natural for human beings to fall into holes. We like to project and imagine. And so there's a few things that this can do. One, we can like to imagine that if we weren't married, we would be doing what we want to do with our life; we imagine that, if we weren't married, we would be doing what we would want to be doing. Likewise, we imagine if we're not married, how happy we'd be if we were married, because there's an absence of reality there which cannot stop our imagination.

So the first Nietzschean point is to realise that very often dichotomies like passion versus family and so on, may simply be in the business of hole hope and to deconstruct that, because the whole hope with the "W" is finding hope and inspiration based on actuality. Of course, none of us can handle the full Lacanian Real, but there is something to working towards approaching it better. Well, when you're married and you're in a family, that is a radical encounter with the Real, if you will. And you have two choices: you can either imagine who you would be if you weren't in a family, or you can look to create with the actual that you have, and do something with that and create out of that.

So let's consider the passion of new experience, which is what a lot of people actually call passion. For example, it's fun to visit somewhere you've never been before. It's fun to be with someone you've never met before. There's

this kind of passion and excitement. But I would call that hole passion with an H, while in marriage you often have to learn how to have whole passion, with a W. How do you have passion with someone who is the same person? You're the same person, but guess what? That means both of you have to have that kind of passion, that Whole Hope passion. You have to be yourselves Nietzschean children, creating your own value, seeing value, creating newness, creating passion. There is creative passion and there's simply the passion of something new, which then once you do it, it's boring, right? So it's very important to also note that this dichotomy between passion outside of marriage and getting married is strongly feeding into a notion of passion that is hole passion and based on an absence of reality. And Nietzsche, I think, would spit on that and have nothing to do with that. That is not what he means by passion in any way whatsoever, because his whole notion of passion is based on evaluating, giving value to something, and standing for it against other people.

However, I would say there is a deeper problem. I mean a lot of people can use the example of marrying or not marrying because it's just such a vivid example, right? Also, if you're young and not married, you can kind of automatically position yourself as special because you're not married. And maybe you are special, but you won't be just because you're not married. There's a deeper problem. For example, what about the inability to do something because you don't want to tell people how little money you're making doing it? Or what about your ability to do something that other people don't understand?

So, for Nietzsche, we can see the example very clearly between creating your own values, and following your own values with the distinction between price and value in economics. If you tell people, 'Hey, I'm having a

conversation on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and it's going to be on the family.' And people will probably respond, 'Are you getting paid for that?' And the existential anxiety that comes from that question, like 'Why are you doing it,' right? Are you getting paid? Nietzsche is very interesting because in Nietzsche, though he seems to be ok with utility, he's also not in favour of hard utilitarianism because 'use' and 'price' are all a part of a social order. And so in Nietzsche, what we see is that nobility is not just utilitarianism. The ability to see something as noble is not because it is useful or because it is going to make money or something like that. But it's because it is good in and for itself. That is why it is noble. So, for example, with Philosophy Portal and a lot of these online groups, no one has necessarily turned this into a corporation. Yes, there were payments for classes, but not like something that the society is going to go, 'Oh great, you're using your degree in a great way.' So this right here has to entail a kind of Nietzschean and childlike activity to do it precisely because you're not able to clearly show the utility of it, or the price of it, in terms of the social order or the economy.

In other words, you have to stand on your own. The reason generally that families tend to unfortunately favour the last man is because they tend to operate according to price instead of value, utility instead of nobility. There is a tendency for families to do that, and that's very fair. But does the family have to do that? No. And also there's a tendency for individuals who are just alone, who just stay in their apartments all day and play video games. You know, it is not the case that being an unmarried person means you're going to become the overman. You might just be the last man. And then the funny thing is, if you had a family, it'd be like jumping out of a window. You better learn to fly. Like the family can put pressure on you, or force you to come out of yourself and to finish things.

And in fact, to close this point, let's say you're really passionate about writing a book, but you never say finish it or publish it, or go through the misery of the editing or the whole publication process. Well then it's just a passion, right? But it never becomes concrete. Whereas if you're married or if you have a family, or if you have economic realities, they actually can be great to force you to finally finish that thing, to force you to finally do a thing, and to actually force yourself to become the Nietzschean child. Because there's that flame there where it's like, 'Hey, you're passionate about this thing, but that alone doesn't mean it will materialise.'

So to close, I think it's that you see actually ways that the family can help make passion concrete, and you see ways that passion without the family can just be a passion that is never realised. But you can also see where the family can push people into thinking in terms of utility, and say value without actually moving in the state of nobility. So there's that contingency and that's one of the reasons why Nietzsche is so important because you have this deep, deep contingency. But that makes sense of course, because it's creating your own values, and you know, operating according to that, and that's going to be an important engine of the whole process.⁴⁹⁵

Cadell: Alright, fantastic. I think that the first thing that comes to my mind from these meditations is Michelle's emphasising that, our contemporary culture, perhaps after the technological revolutions of the birth control pill, and various other things that liberate sexual energy, points towards a sex positive ideology, which disconnects sex from suffering. This ideology disconnects sex from anything negative. And I think that that's actually a good

⁴⁹⁵ This reminds one of Jason Bernstein's paper for this anthology, with an emphasis on Nietzsche as thinking the ontological reflexivity of evolution becoming for-itself (see: Chapter 14).

way to keep that energy in a childish state as opposed to a childlike state. Because if you keep the sexual energy in a childish state, you're going to have a relationship with it which is unable to bear the inherent suffering and negativities that come with actual concrete sexuality in deep intimate relationships. And in fact, anytime you encounter any suffering or negativity in sexuality, you might interpret that as a sign that I've got to keep this away, I've got to go the other way, I've got to move to the next pleasurable object or something like that. So it keeps the energy unmeasured, and it keeps the energy unmediated.

I also want to connect to what Daniel emphasises, where he suggests that family can make passion concrete. Now, as you mentioned, I don't think Nietzsche would say that being single is better than having a family, or having a family is better than being single, but the family is a vehicle to make passion concrete. And I think that maybe the general principle that Nietzsche would sort of emphasise is to make passion concrete in some way. It could be that the sexual energy has to move through a process of sublimation and the family is a life giving concrete process, functioning as a natural outlet for that. And I think that this idea does help us approach this paradox, which is all too common in our contemporary culture, in the divide between passionate relationships and long-term commitment. In trying to work through that paradox, we can show that passionate relationships can become quickly empty and devoid of any meaning. And we can also show the way in which long-term relationships can actually be a vehicle for new experiences. That certainly needs to be thought more deeply, and I think that you both pointed towards that in a very helpful way.

I think connected to specifically what Daniel was saying about the distinctions between price and value, utility and nobility, is that there's something interesting Nietzsche

presents us with in a strange paradox in both the state and the market. So he sees the state as becoming a new idol that replaces God. You know, we can get all of our security, we can get all of our safety from the state. And he sees the market as a place with a high noise to signal ratio. So it's hard to actually get at the gold so to speak. You have a lot of people who are functioning as empty actors, who are claiming to be selling gold, but then, you know, it's like the Terence McKenna distinction that it's hard to tell the difference between 'shit and shine-o-la.' You know there's a lot of shit on the marketplace and that's what he means by the high noise to signal ratio.

And at the same time many people do need to submit, I suppose is one word, to either the state or market functions even if they're not identifying with them. We need them in some sense to build and sustain a family life. We gotta keep the lights on, we gotta keep the food on the table, and so forth. So how do you think we can approach these paradoxes today? It seems like the ultimate overman activity to be able to work through both the state and the market. I think I can relate to this personally with it being hard to fully be my creative self within an academic structure, which is run by the state, and it's also hard to be fully my creative self in a market context, where you've got to sell courses and stuff like this. So working through this paradox can be difficult.

Michelle: I mean, the big phrases that keep flashing in my mind are 'entrepreneur' and keeping 'multiple irons in the fire.' I think that sometimes being willing to make decisions like living in a place with lower living costs, even though it's not like a world class city. I think you will be able to navigate this tension if you do it in this way. Each child would be like having to make their own way, even financially. And sometimes that means making sacrifices with costs of living. Maybe you will not be in LA with all the

movers and shakers. Sometimes that might mean for a time living back with your family. You kind of have to humble yourself and realise that.

Sometimes you might feel like you're not making it or something, but it's because you're making something else happen that's bigger. So I think about that, I think about the fact that if you have multiple irons in the fire, like being able to have a couple of things that could be self-sustaining. You can do it once and put a lot of good energy and work into it, but then, it can be its own little thing, and it can take off whenever it takes off. I think too, ideally, that we learned from a younger age, where we could just sustain ourselves, like hunting and fishing. My family was kind of from that culture in South Africa. That was a big part of our culture, you know, gardening, and other self-sustaining activities. We actually do need to eat, so why don't we learn how to actually work with the land itself? And yeah, sure, you still have to go out to the grocery store, but you can at least learn some skills for growing on your own basic foods to eat and to live off of.

Now it is challenging and difficult because you are always going to rely somewhat on the system. But I think trying not to get caught up in what other people think is important, because that's a big thing. I mean, I am really grateful for Nietzsche's encouragement to not care about what other people think. Yes, most people can be concerned for good reasons, they want you to be happy. But you know, sometimes when you're doing something that's different or off the beaten path, which I think the overman ultimately is, the social order won't get it. You have to be different yourself, and be ok with that difference. Some things will be very hard to explain. Maybe it won't be easy to tell the neighbours what you're doing, or have other people in your contacts understand. They may not understand if it is not a socially recognised accolade. So

it's about juggling multiple things and then not worrying about how other people on the outside might perceive that and how it might be unintelligible to them, and therefore hard for them to tell their neighbours or their friends. But just be ok with that. It's ok. And I think in accepting that, and then just kind of working through that, this is a big thing.

One more thing, practically speaking, is I think knowing from a young age that working hard, not just as a cognitive machine, but just realising your own capability to do something of value. From a pretty young age I started babysitting. I wanted to go and help people, and you know, I wanted to earn some money too, so that I could not constantly rely on my parents for this or that, even though they were very generous and willing. But I still wanted to generate this sense of being able to do something of value that actually mattered to somebody and could solve a problem for somebody.

In that way, I started to think of money as ultimately solving problems. So you're solving a problem for somebody, they give you money, so then you can solve a problem with that money. Daniel too, from a young age; we would be talking about business, and all of that, just kind of understanding the sense of the value, how it's related to money, and then how it's related to maybe saving and seeing that as a long term thing, you know. So those are some things that come to mind, you know?

Daniel: Very good. A few things. One, I think this question gets at why *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is unique. It starts off, not merely as a book about how to be enlightened. It starts off where Zarathustra is enlightened. You have noted this, Cadell.⁴⁹⁶ It is about growing. He has this interesting line at the very beginning where he says,

⁴⁹⁶ See: "Spirit's Logic" in this anthology (Chapter 1).

well you could empty and become man again. What? I thought you wanted to be the overman? What do you mean, become man again? Well, becoming man seems to mean the social order. Like, you know, man is not the overman. It can also be seen as kind of an overcoming of the social order, right. But it's one thing to do that in a cave, it's another thing to do that in the social order. And so Zarathustra is situated in that, and I think you've brought this up. I think we can connect this with Hegel's religion, you know, before absolute knowing, like what does it mean to have a society or community of absolute knowing? It's one thing to have absolute knowing as a kind of isolated individual, but it's another thing to talk about it in the context of a social order.⁴⁹⁷

Another thing, think about the temptation of the economy to treat value as just price. If you think in terms of price, how much am I making, you know, what is this worth as opposed to you looking at something and saying, 'I'm reading Nietzsche because it matters'. So that's the first thing you have to resist: if you're in the economy, is the replacement of value with price. The state is saying 'this is good' because this is what the zeitgeist of the social order says is good; like it is good to vote in elections, it's good to do that. Well, maybe you say, 'If I vote in the elections I'm supporting the industrial military complex, so I'm not going to vote.' Maybe you do vote, maybe you do decide to do that, but you are not just following the state; you maybe decided that voting for you is very important. But you don't just absorb it, right? You don't just absorb what other people are doing. So the first thing I would say is not to just absorb ways of evaluating.⁴⁹⁸ 'Evaluate' basically has

⁴⁹⁷ Perhaps Layman Pascal points towards the importance of thinking both with the idea of Zarathustra as a great "civilising shaman," see: "Nietzsche = Time + Tragedy" (Chapter 3).

⁴⁹⁸ The theme of Nietzsche/Zarathustra going to the source of evaluation itself can be found in the work of Owen Cox (Chapter 5), Daniel Fraga (Chapter 18), and Samuel Barnes (Chapter 20).

the word value in it, to give something value. So you don't want to absorb evaluation from the economy, because then you're thinking in terms of price and salary, and you don't want to move it from the state, because it's going to be like the secondhand smoke of the zeitgeist.

Now the other thing that comes into play is thinking a lot of what this is going to have to do, as Michelle has already noted, with fighting status anxiety. The beloved Mr. Ebert will speak on this, and he is exactly right.⁴⁹⁹ Here is where the notion of being willing to die is important. If I were to say to you, 'Hey Cadell, when and how are you going to get Philosophy Portal going?', and you in your mind thought you had to do it by 30 as opposed to by 60, well that's a very different ballgame. And I would argue that in our culture, one of the things that the economy and state tends to absorb is that your life is over if you haven't made it by 30. You failed. You're done. If you can actually realise how insane that is, and instead, as I always say, realise that the secret is in 'the middle years', you're gold. We always talk about the early years. We talk about the later years. But the middle years are the secret. That's where you're actually able to evaluate, think in terms of value, and plan according to the middle years, not merely up to when you're 30 or what you're going to do after you retire at 60. You can start to socioeconomically plan and design your life very differently, if you think in terms of the middle years.⁵⁰⁰

But a reason we don't do that is because of the status anxiety. We feel as if we're not in a professorship by the

⁴⁹⁹ For more on how the notion of the Child can combat status anxiety, see Alex Ebert's contribution to this anthology (Chapter 8).

⁵⁰⁰ In order to embody a spirit capable of creating in the "Middle Years," we should look to loving contradiction at the heart of split-process itself, as opposed to searching for an end to contradiction and a resolution to the split, as emphasised well by Quinn Whelehan in this anthology (Chapter 15).

time we're 30, or if we're not in the Forbes top 30 by 30, then we feel we have messed up. And that seems also, I think, actually to be a part of a kind of 'hole hope', because we like to say, 'Oh, if you're the CEO of a company by 28, imagine what they'll do by the time they're 64.' The truth of the matter is that many people who do very well by 30, that's it. They kind of flatten out after that. This is because, actually, they never transitioned to intrinsic motivation from extrinsic motivation. So that's the other thing that one must resist from the economy. The economy teaches you fundamentally to think in terms of extrinsic motivation, motivation from extrinsic sources as opposed to intrinsic motivation, which as you know, I think of Nietzsche as an example of intrinsic motivation as paramount. And so being intrinsically motivated is to pay attention to the rules of compounding. If you can be intrinsically motivated to do something every single day of your life, sure, you may not be the CEO of a company, but by the time you're 30. But if you don't freaking care because the social order is not the source of your values and every single day you can be intrinsically motivated to do something, you'd be amazed at what you can do by the time you're 40 or 50 or 60 or whatever.

So the first thing I would say is to economically get out of your freaking head that your life is determined by what you do by 30. To think in terms of compounding instead of just planning. Planning life is about cultivating vision more than it is about having a plan, having the ability to see opportunity, to see things as worth doing; that is far more important than just planning because planning always tends to be an abstraction. You know, Hegel says "think the now not the future," well with planning you can make that mistake. So cultivate vision instead of planning and think in terms of compounding as opposed to some 30 year plan or whatever.

The other thing is, obviously you have to plan to go to Krogers or something, so I'm not saying that a plan in all circumstances is bad. But think about when you think about your future, do you think about it in terms of climbing a ladder? Getting up in a corporation? Think about that, where did your plan come from? Is it yours or is it the system's? So that's the other thing because the system will steal your middle years. The system is in the business of stealing your freaking middle years. So the fight is to fight like heck for your middle years. Think in terms of middle years, think in terms of intrinsic motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation, and think in terms of evaluation as opposed to price. Be able to be someone that says, "I do X even if nobody understands it."⁵⁰¹ I would also say look at blue collar jobs. Everyone in our age tends to think of white collar jobs, because that's status. You get status when you work for a freaking AI company. Now, by all means, if literally the AI company is your values, your evaluations, there's nothing wrong with working for a company. As we said earlier, there is no state inherently better than another. Being an entrepreneur is not inherently better than working for a corporation, it depends. The issue is that if you work for a corporation, it's very, very difficult not to get absorbed into it. That's the issue. Just like it's very very hard to be enlightened if you come down the mountain, right? So being in a corporation can arguably be harder than being an entrepreneur, and might be a crucible that makes you more of an overman, so it depends.

At the same time, it is very hard to start your own business or start your own thing and not lose yourself in it, or become depressed, or just get caught in the passion of it and not make it concrete. There's always obstacles in every path of life. But the main thing is to think in terms of

⁵⁰¹ Here one requires a "Wild Wisdom," as emphasised by James Wisdom in this anthology (Chapter 16).

time, because if you're trying to do creative work, like people are in our intellectual space, then the name of the game is carving out 'free time.' Most people's free time is merely to consume things, right? They don't create with their free time. So instead of thinking about free time, think about creating time. Even change the language in your head because what does free time mean? It means a time when you're not getting paid. So that right there has a language of economics, and if you're not getting paid it doesn't have value, because price is value in capitalism, right? So don't think about free time, think about "it is your time" or "creative time to do what you want to do." Think about work that can carve out time so you can realise your own values. And you'd be amazed how plumbing, painting, unloading trucks, can pay very well, and can take care of things so that you have more creative time.⁵⁰²

If you're doing a job where you're giving them your mind, you're likely doing a white collar job. Well that means they're using you for your brain, ok? But if you're going to say unload trucks, they're paying you more for your body. But your brain is still yours, right? And your brain, that's going to be the source of evaluation, creation, or different things. If you are going to work and give them your brain, they sure as heck better be paying you. Think of it like that way you are coming home: if your brain is foggy and you're not able to think and you can't evaluate, you better darn well make sure that that job you're doing, that white collar whatever is your evaluation, ok? Whatever you do, that after doing, your brain is done, like you are exhausted mentally, that better be your values, that better be your evaluation. So those would be some of the questions I would start the inquiry with.

⁵⁰² In this we might think of Thomas Winn's work on Heidegger and 'letting be' (Chapter 22), which blue collar work might leave our mind to indeed 'let'.

Cadell: That's great. There is this Žižekian principle, which says "every 'one' begins as an impossibility opening to multiplicity." And I just want to emphasise that because I feel like the question I posed is kind of like something I experience as an impossibility: like how are you going to get out of the market-state dichotomy? And then Michelle immediately starts by emphasising that you should have a "multiplicity of irons in the fire." You know, "we should have some variation here," you know, to deal with the impossibility! You know I think it's a good way to start thinking about the problem from that standpoint.

And yeah, there is a lot here to reflect on, I think. This is why I think the notion of absolute knowing or the overman, however you want to think about higher states of cognition, is so important, because so much of this is about making sure that your intelligence is not serving an identity which is a reification of a certain social order, and so your identity is rather derived from your own evaluations like Daniel was emphasising in there towards the end.

In this context, I mean I really hope I don't need to have Philosophy Portal successful by the time I'm 30, because I'm about 6 years behind schedule on that clock! But it is so true about thinking "the middle years," and I want to make a strange connection here with the middle years. This connection does fit within the context of the anthology, which is that, I have a lot of respect for Christianity, and I've explored Christian mythology. But one of the very authentic or genuine things that bothered me about the story of Jesus, is that he died in his early 30s. And also you don't get to hear much about large and important parts of his life's development.

From an intuition, after teaching about *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I actually make an argument in the last paper in this anthology, that what's interesting about Zarathustra

is that his self-sacrifice happens when, by my estimations, he's in his 60s.⁵⁰³ So there's this extended period of time, the middle years, which you can sort of ask yourself, "What do I do with these middle years?" I also think about it in a historical context, because Christianity emerged at a time when our natural life expectancy was, maybe like 40? Maybe even lower. But now we do have a society where the general life expectancy is closer to 80. So you're probably going to make it to 80 even if you're struggling financially. And so that question of the middle years really opens up and becomes like a huge void for thought, literally, where Daniel suggests we put our 'hole hopes.' So now you are emphasising that there are all these 'hole hopes,' and that's very personal, and that's very intimate, and we do need to think about it, philosophically. I suppose that's why I emphasise that thinking the difference between Jesus and Zarathustra is a major consequence of post-Nietzschean philosophy.

Let me give an example from my personal life of why this is important. My father structured his mind along the lines of, "When I retire, I'm going to do all these hikes, live in the mountains, get closer to nature." He was Welsh and loved to hike in the mountains, and you know live in nature, and all these, what seem to me now, like "Nietzschean visions." But unfortunately he got terminal cancer a few years before he could retire properly. And that's not an uncommon situation. There are many situations where people plan for retirement, and they never make it to retirement. There are also opposite situations where they make it to retirement, but they don't know what to do with themselves because they have no connection to intrinsic motivation. All of these things are absolutely essential to think through, and work through. So I appreciate a lot of these reflections you have offered.

⁵⁰³ See: "Philosophy After Nietzsche" (Chapter 25).

Daniel: That was extremely good. I just want to note that the problem of the middle years is going to become more pronounced as life expectancy grows. The other thing is that this gets into what Michelle mentioned about personal finance, talking about the difference between shopping at ‘Sam’s’ versus shopping at ‘Food Line,’ or the difference in having your checking account at ‘Wells Fargo’ versus ‘Ally’ because there are different interest rates. You know, we can get into the ‘nitty gritty.’ There are answers to that sort of thing, and we can get into the concrete details, and there are ways to navigate it.

And the last thing I’ll say on this topic is we need to think in terms, not just of money, but time, health, and money, which we’ve talked about before, on not only how I am going to pay for life, but also how am I going to use my time? And how am I going to maintain my health? Sometimes, as you say, your health is not in your control. And I think this is something that Nietzsche knew, because his health was not good. You don’t know where life is going to take you. You want to be able to feel like you used your time well, *now*. Maybe not completely all the time like you want to, but with a little restriction there is a ‘tantra/sutra’ there, right?⁵⁰⁴ There’s a little restriction in that you have to go to work, but then when you get home it can mean more, and you have the energy for your intrinsic motivation, for your creative time. That way you avoid weekend culture where you go out and hedonistically consume, right? So I think those nuances of this question are very important and become very important in these different intellectual communities.

Cadell: Absolutely. Now building from there, I think the next topic I would like to bring up is something that may help us think these middle years, a little more deeply.

⁵⁰⁴ For more on the importance of the tantra/sutra divide, see Thomas Hamelryck’s contribution to this anthology (Chapter 4).

Nietzsche makes a strong distinction between the friend and the neighbour. He emphasises that the friend is someone who bestows an entire world. In my own thinking about this, it's inclusive of the negativities and the difficulties and the challenges and the struggles of being a human. And the neighbour seems to be someone restricted to partial revealings, small talk, shallow gossip.

I want to situate this concept in relation to the context of our contemporary extended families, where it seems to be more and more difficult to embody and actualise meaning. There is more and more pressure being driven down on a nuclear family and even single parent households. To be responsible for all of the dimensions of raising a family, when of course our history is in a tribal setting. So how should we think of this distinction between the friend and the neighbour? And how might this distinction be worthwhile in rethinking the extended family?

Michelle: That's a great question. You might get lucky and have extended family that just are kind of like the Nietzschean friend, right. It's very unlikely, but maybe that is a possibility, or you may have extended family who just kind of trust you. They're like maybe not exactly like friends but they're people who trust you in what you value. Maybe they're religious or more metaphysical in that they feel a bigger calling in their life, which then makes them more understanding of that creative philosophical pursuit, or things like that.

But of course that's not everyone's situation, necessarily. I think maybe it does make me wonder if this could be where this radical creativity of Nietzsche comes in. Of course you should always offer those extended family members in your life: kindness, respect, compassion. But in terms of actually like creating a tribe, it would be in a sense more of a creative act, where you can acknowledge

and recognise in other people that they too have these values and pursuits that are very hard to understand and they aren't making money, you know. But they are valuable and they maybe will make money one day. But it's still something that they are doing intrinsically, right.

We were a part of a creative community for a long time, and that was like a place where it was very organic, like it had very much the vibe of a place where there's a lot of foot traffic. The door was open, lots of people from different ages would come in. We combined musicians and other people. Creatives tended to be the ones who would come by and speak, but it was open to anyone really. And you know, you got this organic feedback. There are certain people who would come back and want to talk or come to the open mics that would happen. I think it's an interesting balance creating the space or the environment for it, because it has to be organic.

So I think that the Nietzschean friend has to be something that kind of happens in a little bit more of an organic way, where you don't have these tethered obligations of friendship in the mainstream sense, right? Where you get this vibe of 'what are you going to do for me?' 'What am I doing for you?' It's very much like what are you doing for yourself and how can we learn from each other in that? How could we be inspired by each other in that, and like just get excited about what each other is doing and share about it. In that sense it's an interesting passive-active act of holding space for, and making the space for, that to happen. I think as it relates, very practically, to family, I think about our children and how a lot of times we have art retreats at our house, or when we have things where people come by and visitors from across the pond, or whoever they are who we've met in these internet circles. They tend to be very intrinsically motivated people for the most part. I would say these people are

interested in stuff just because they're passionate about it, and they're actually making it into something concrete too.

And that's really cool because then they see that grown-ups do stuff that they are actually excited about too. You know, a lot of times kids only see the obligations. And yes, there is a place for that. Like we've talked about, it's very important to acknowledge that, but when people choose their obligation, they choose their burden because if it's something they're intrinsically motivated to do, it's a whole different story. And it comes with this vigour for life and this excitement for life, and this constant renewal and creativity, you know? Being able to like revive any situation at any age at any time, any moment.

So for me, practically speaking, I think that's really neat. In a way like if you're blessed and lucky, and I think we're really, really thankful to have people who are biological extended family, and can come alongside to help us with the practical realities of children. Extended families become very much needed when you have a family. Daniel's mom is watching our children right now. But I think there's also a way in which you start to create that, too, by making space for people to come in, and sort of share their intrinsic motivation, share their projects, and inspire you, and you inspire them. The children then get excited and want to share what they're making. I know it sounds like a fantasy land, but it can actually happen, in being able to hold space for that, and create the space for that.

I am saying that at least one could try it, you know, and kind of acknowledge the existing extended family. Always show kindness, compassion, and care or help with somebody who needs help. In being able to acknowledge and sort of allow for those relationships within the extended family to grow and develop over the years and be part of your nuclear family. I mean in this kind of helping as family

does. But then there is also this kind of extended family that you create through the Nietzschean friend, and not just the neighbour who does the small talk, and gossip. The Nietzschean friends are people who genuinely go through the highs and lows, the hardships of your project, and all of that. Those are the people who I think you can create with in a way, and create an extended family with.⁵⁰⁵ I hope that makes sense.

Daniel: Maybe friends help you cultivate inspiration, and neighbours help you kill time. Now the person who lives next door to you might be a friend. You know neighbour does not mean proximity in Nietzsche. And your family, your extended family, could be friends in this sense. But I think examining the experience of time between different kinds of people can help get this distinction. You know there are some people who you will talk with and four hours go by, and like 'what happened to the time?' There are other people where five minutes go by, and it's like 'please make it stop.' And that is phenomenological. I actually am quite interested in Nietzschean phenomenology. I am just addicted to phenomenology, so I just throw it in wherever I can. But this kind of thinking of time in this context, like what is the experience of time like with the 'neighbour?' It feels like you're trying to kill it, and really I would say a Nietzschean critique of the social order is a social order that is always trying to get through time as opposed to like making time alive.

It's like 'at 7 o'clock we are going to a party.' You're always waiting to get to something, it's like you're trying to kill time. And if you live in a social order that's always in the business of killing time, or trying to get through time, as

⁵⁰⁵ For a meditation on the way Nietzsche may be interpreted in the context of liminal web friendships and creations of new tribes or 'dividual networks,' see David Högberg and Filip Lundström article in this anthology "The Digital Desert and the Burning Overman" (Chapter 17) and also the dialogue between Cadell Last, Kevin Orosz, and Daniel Dick (Chapter 10).

opposed to feeling like you never have enough time. That is a good sign. But not in a sense of rushing or nervousness, but kind of like 'this is so wonderful, I wish I could keep going,' and a friend is someone who helps cultivate that kind of experience of time. Also, with the friend, it will feel like no time has passed at all between the times you see them. You know you'll see them and maybe not see them for two years, but it's like the conversation picks up right where it left off. Filip Niklas was mentioning that, and I think that's exactly right. Like, you have this experience of a friend where it's like no time ever passes, and time is always alive, or to use the Nietzschean language, time is dancing.

Whereas, with the neighbour, it's not that you dislike them, it's not that there's any meanness. But it's just a different experience of time. And I think again because I am so big on intrinsic motivation, that time is experienced differently when you are intrinsically motivated. People talk about the flow state, that's perfectly valid here. Whereas when you're not intrinsically motivated, time is a drag.

What this difference in phenomenological time would also mean is that when you want to be a friend to someone, it is because a friend inspires. You're like inspired to be alive. That's why time kind of speeds up and it has this kind of Kairos fullness of time. That would mean being a friend is someone who inspires other people. You inspire people. And I think in Nietzsche this would be kind of a big notion. Like for Nietzsche, when he says be 'beyond good and evil,' what he's saying is you don't want to be a 'good person' because good is defined by the social order. It's not that he wants you to go murder people. He wants you to be someone who inspires others. He wants you to be an inspiration, and your friends are the people who inspire you and you inspire them. And there's this cultivation of inspiration, I think is what defines friendship.

And if we think of Nietzsche as saying 'if you're inspiring you're good, but if you're good you're not necessarily inspiring,' I think that's the key here. I think when he says that we should embody the master ethic as opposed to slave morality, it is not that you are killing people, you know. You're probably not stealing or doing things like that, since nobility can entail goodness. The issue is like C.S. Lewis' 'First Things First' principle. If you put 'first things first,' you can get 'second things' also. But if you put second things first, you can lose both. So likewise, if you're inspiring, then it is also good. But if you're only good, well then actually what ends up happening, is there's a lack of inspiration. And funny enough, the good can be lost because you don't care anymore, it loses significance, and the relationship dies.

So maybe a neighbour is someone where the relationship is mostly in terms of good, 'goodness.' Whereas a friendship is mostly in the business of inspiration and vision. Both of those can be identified by paying attention to the experience of time.

Cadell: I love this focus on the phenomenology of time; that is a good way to spend our time, I think. But I want to start a little bit with a reflection on what Michelle was saying about the extended family. What disappoints me the most about the natural or extended family, is that you feel like because everyone collectively assumes that 'we have to be in this network,' that that gives people an excuse to act poorly. Because there's no accountability and responsibility. And like they just sort of act as if 'well I'm your sister or brother, and so because I'm your sister or brother, I can just do whatever I want and you just have to put up with it.' And it's always disturbed me a little bit.

And at the same time, I have always liked the idea of 'cultural family.' I like this idea that we can create an

extended family. But there are all sorts of paradoxes here when you try to think about creating an extended family, with people who make you feel like time is coming to life, and then actually reproducing and creating life because we are all linked through organic reproduction at the end of the day. So these have to be thought of together, and that's extraordinarily difficult, but an extraordinarily important thing to do.

I of course also liked when Daniel was talking about the phenomenology of time. When it comes to time coming to life and killing time. I think one interesting connection here is that Nietzsche felt that the rabble or people in the normative social order were unable to bare their own madness, which is deep down you're a killer. Ashamed of your self-reflection. As a consequence of not being able to hold your own madness, you just kill time then. What you want to do is bring that madness to the surface in a contained way. You are not actually going to kill people, or just going to act on your madness blindly. But why are people so obsessed with these serial killer dramas, like the new Jeffrey Dahmer biopic? It's because most people are probably looking at some sort of unconscious self-reflection of intrinsic motivation in some way. The point being here is that by befriending your inner madness and making space for it, and containing it, and having an outlet for it, you can be the type of person that makes time come to life, and that's an interesting thing that makes life worth living.

The next aspect that would be interesting to talk about, when it is in the context of making time come alive, and also bringing life into this world, is that there is a quantitative decline in fertility today. There is also an emergence of a culture of adults who are in a childless state, and are building their identities in a different way than we were building our identities in the past. And at the same time, Nietzsche, somewhat controversially, suggests

that the whole riddle of woman is resolved by giving birth to children, and in the identity of the mother, which is an interesting connection with the metaphor that Michelle opened with, connecting the camel, lion, and child to the actual birth process.⁵⁰⁶

And so in this context, how might the idea of the riddle of woman and the birth of the child, specifically introduced and reflected upon for the future of raising young boys and girls? That's one aspect of the question. The second aspect of the question is more of a critique of Nietzsche's idea here, which is saying how might we think the gap in identity where the child that one should give birth to is an inner metaphor as opposed to a biological externalisation?

My point with this framing is that I do think that we should have a culture where we can talk responsibly and maturely about a woman becoming pregnant and becoming a mother. And I think that if we have a culture where we can't have those conversations, men and women will suffer for that. And at the same time, I do agree with the more modern conception that all women's destiny is not tied to pregnancy. There are men and women who will choose not to go that path, and I think that's a context dependent thing. So in this context, how would you approach these two questions? On the one hand, talking about pregnancy as the resolution of a deep riddle for young boys and girls, and on the other hand, identifying a gap where maybe we should think about this process metaphorically, as opposed to literally.

Michelle: Yeah, so you know, Nietzsche has an interesting view on women, right? And some of his more controversial statements. But I think I'll just make a quick note on Nietzsche himself, his life. When he was writing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, this was after his fallout with Lou

⁵⁰⁶ See also "Thus Spoke Motherhood" (Interlude 6).

Salomé, who he had proposed to, you know, a few times. And he also fell out with his mother because of this. And he had his sister, Elisabeth, who he had a falling out with. And so basically all the women in his life that he loved, you know, he had a complete falling out. Then he kind of goes into this great despair there, and hurt and pain.

It's interesting too, because there's that photo of Pierre, Nietzsche, and Salomé, and she's actually the one holding the whip. And in this picture they're tethered to his ox pulling a wagon. This is funny because there is a section in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* where he is talking to an older woman, and he says, 'whenever you go to women, don't forget to bring the whip!' I wonder if that is kind of like a jab at Salomé, you know, I'm going to get the whip back from Salomé. Because she's the one holding it in that portrait picture. Or if actually it's just saying 'no, bring the whip for us women to use on the men.'

So there's some interesting readings to be had there. I do think we should take into account that he was writing this book when he was discouraged by his own painful experience with women. That will come out in his own writings, as it should, since he is a human. I don't think he wants us to make him into an idol. And some of his maybe controversial statements about women or even shortcomings with women, could sort of prove his point that we should learn to love imperfection, and we should learn to hold space for the imperfect man. You know he is a man, and he would, I think, advise that you don't idolise me, but make your own vision and values, what you uphold and put your energy into. Don't just try to be like me. I think that is really important to think about with Nietzsche, and to kind of take an empathetic look at his position toward women.

In any case, it is an interesting topic. I think that women today are in an interesting position, it's kind of like "damned if you do, damned if you don't." If you have kids you're wasting your potential. If you don't have kids you should have been a mom, you know? I think men are in their own unique and very challenging position given the times we are in. I think that's why it reminds me of what Daniel has said about Hegel and the "Absolute Choice."⁵⁰⁷ Nietzsche is such a philosopher of 'make a choice,' and realise that it is going to come with its incredible suffering and hardships, but it's also going to come with the fact that you made that choice, and can stand by that choice, and persist through it. You can believe in it and believe in what you're doing. You can say I value this so much that even if I were to do this over and over and over again in an eternal return, I would still stand by this choice.

And so that's kind of like the type of choice we have with birth-giving, you know, birth control and other technologies that some may use, some may not, but it's there. I think that's a very important thing to acknowledge and I think that it's yeah, I do think that birth itself often is like I said, it's a very very scary threshold to cross. But when you do, there's something that opens up a whole other world too. Of course, I should add that people who have their own creative and philosophical pursuits beyond their own life can have their own maternal project.

However, from a mother's perspective, with our children, they see your values, they see the things you love to do, or what mom and dad love to do. And they take their time to do this or that or the other. They take their time to talk with us about this or ask us these questions. I think that people may have a sort of inner direction toward one way or

⁵⁰⁷ See: Garner, D. 2022. The Absolute Choice. In: *Enter the Alien: Thinking as 21st Century Hegel*. Garner, D. & Last, C. (Eds.). Philosophy Portal Books.

another, and I think you kind of just want to hold space for that. But also in having a family, obviously for us it's like what we see as a value in having, family and children. So that's kind of an implicit value they might witness. But also to sort of understand that, you know, what a person provides in their own intrinsic value is already a type of provision. It's a provision in and of itself, it's a productivity or a type of reproductive energy, and those are fruits in and of themselves.

I think it's just basically like the way to kind of talk about becoming a mother or parent, is to just not really chastise one or the other option, really. However, my personality is that I just tend to be really naturally maternal. I love babies and children. And so you know, if I see a baby, it's cute, it's funny to see how the children will respond or what they kind of do. Sometimes it's funny just because of the personalities of the children. They do their own things, maybe one child kind of looks at the baby, or you know you have a child who's like really cute. The kids will then also want to cuddle or hug the baby. And so it's like I think children themselves have their own sort of natural inclinations in that direction. They might be nurturing toward children themselves, as a child even. It's very very fascinating to watch. They also might be very nurturing towards their own projects, like what things they like to build or do or make. So I don't know, I think ultimately that's kind of how I would think about it, and what things come to mind regarding the question.

Daniel: Wonderful Michelle, a few things. Nietzsche talks about friends, and he also talks about enemies, and one of the reasons he doesn't like 'love your neighbour,' is because it makes it sound like you avoid your enemy. Now funny enough, actually when Jesus is saying 'love your neighbour,' the national neighbours of the Israelities are mostly trying to kill them. And on the Good Samaritan, the

Samaritans are enemies. So it's always important to kind of note that even in Christianity, enemy and neighbour blur. But neighbour now connotes 'suburbia.' But back when the neighbour would have been more national, or more like the nation state, the neightboughts were easily trying to kill you. But it's interesting because the reason why a friend is kind of an enemy, is because your friend is the one precisely, in these intellectual communities, forcing you to rise up to the occasion of being able to talk about Nietzsche, for example. It's kind of like, 'come on, let's go.' There's a kind of challenge there.

And so the friend is funny. In some ways they can feel like an enemy. It's like you know, the famous eternal return. One person is an angel, to someone else they are a demon, right? It's the same entity and different things. Well, a child is interesting because the child is your friend, but also they force you to do things you don't want to do, right? There's a kind of enemy relationship there. Sometimes they're taking your time. They are throwing cereal across the kitchen. We always joke about before you have kids, you clean your house, and it's clean for like a year. When you have kids, you clean it five times a day for it to still be messy. So it's kind of funny. There's a kind of challenge in the child. You love them more than anything, but they are trying to destroy you. So the child embodies this friend/enemy dynamic. Enemy might be extreme but you get what I'm trying to say.

Likewise, if you're trying to start a creative project, like writing a book, or you're trying to think of something or start an entrepreneurship project, well it feels like the project is trying to kill you. Like if you're really trying to think a deep thought, like say on Nietzsche and Hegel, it feels like it's trying to kill you, and overwhelm you. It's after you. You love it, but it's also after you. So there's this interesting thing where if we combine the creative act with the child,

there's this double dynamic of friend/enemy, love, trying to kill you, making time feel alive. But time feels alive because you have to meet the condition of surviving it. So you have to "meet the condition." What's very interesting is that Nietzsche almost seems to be suggesting with the woman and pregnancy, especially before birth control, is that the probability of the woman embodying the child is very high. The fact that it is very probable means that the woman is more likely to have to give rise to a being that they will have to cultivate, or exist in that sort of dynamic.⁵⁰⁸

Also, the woman has to figure out how to create an environment that allows the cultivation of that intrinsic motivation. In the same way that when you write a novel, you have to create the space where it emerges, and the characters do their own thing. It's very strange. And I think any of us can say the creative act is like that. You plan to do one thing for your course, you plan to do one thing for your business, and it's alive, and it changes, and you have to flow with it. Men do not have a biological function where it is going to put them in close relation to a friend/enemy. In fact, the male almost is more likely to get sucked into status anxiety, to get sucked into sort of climbing the ladder to prove themselves, to create their phallic symbols, and prove that, you know, whatever, they're the best.

What's also very interesting is that when we talk about women, Michelle is exactly right, if they have a career they've failed being a mother, if they are a mother, they've failed at building a career. In a way Nietzsche may look at that and say well that's wonderful because the woman is forced to create their own values and they're basically forced into a situation where they have to say be more like the child. But the man is not forced into that situation. There's a way to see that Nietzsche is saying women have

⁵⁰⁸ For a meditation that points in the direction of the body as the divine other, see Pamela von Sabljar's reflection in this anthology (Interlude 5).

an advantage, actually. You know their advantage is that their very biology positions them to be in these circumstances where they have to create their own values, or learn to cultivate a being that's going to call them out of themselves.

And I always find it very interesting that you'll have a lot of demographers, politicians talking about the crisis of young men. You don't really hear a lot about the crisis of young women. You don't really hear a cry. You'll hear a crisis about mental health in general. It's a lot of time it will be an emphasis on like, men not having a place to belong or not wanting to work. I think Japan is a very good example of what some people call metamodernity, where men are less likely to naturally end up in a situation that forces them to try to be childlike as opposed to childish. It's much easier for men to stay in a state of childishness, and that's why you can have this emphasis on males, on men having to force the overman and rise to the occasion. Precisely because they're more likely to stay a child. Whereas there's some sort of biological factor that makes it easier for women to mature.

The problem is that when you define success just in terms of a career, well then men are ahead, right? You get the whole patriarchy. But when you look at sort of the whole picture of holding society together, women generally tend to be the ones who are better at taking care of the house, taking care of the children, taking care of the extended family, taking care of the finances, like a multiplicity of tasks where the male just goes to work, then they come home, relax, then do it again. You know, it's more natural for them to do that sort of thing. So again we have to understand what Nietzsche is saying within the context of that. You know all of that, where it's not saying men are better than women. There is a sense in which

men are more likely to stay childish than ever become childlike.

Cadell: Right. Just on the point about the crisis of masculinity. I think it's actually related to the fact that in many different measurements, intelligence, or wealth, or mating opportunity, you have these extreme distributions with men, whereas women tend to cluster around the mean or the average of society. So it's true that women do fit more within society, whereas men tend to break the forms so to speak, and don't fit too well, oftentimes. And that can be problematic. So there may be a crisis of young men because you do have these situations which on the surface look absurd, like some men will have an extraordinarily successful situation, and then there are these large groups of men who you don't know what to do with them. They remain in this childish unmatured and uncultivated space. Certainly women don't know what to do with them, and they don't know what to do with themselves.⁵⁰⁹

Ok, so back to the question and to some of your reflections. I really like what you said, Michelle, about the position of women today being a double bind: you are damned if you do (have a baby/career), damned if you don't (have a baby/career). I think in the past this decision was just treated in such an unquestioned and autonomous way, almost like a natural law which you encounter as opposed to an existential choice that you have to wrestle with. Now on a mass scale it's kind of one of the biggest dialectical reversals in history. You have a situation in only a century or two, where reproduction itself has shifted from a neutral law that you know is going to happen, versus this thing which might make you pull your hair out at night. I've

⁵⁰⁹ For the intellectually inclined spiritual man, which you may be, considering what you are reading right now, see: Last, C., Orosz, K., and Dick, D. 2020. *Sex, Masculinity, God: The Trialogues*. Ouroboros Publishing.

seen a lot of women, in fact almost every woman I know, especially in their 20s and early 30s, who are in this weird situation. They are trying to juggle becoming an engineer, or becoming a lawyer, or X, Y, Z versus timing out the reproduction process, and then balancing out the asymmetries of identity with men. "How does developing a career full time change my identity with men?" "How does having a child change my identity with developing a career?"

I just think it would be great if we had more spaces to bring out these intractable social contradictions. As Michelle already emphasised, we shouldn't chastise one position or the other, but at least make space for that contradiction to be discussed and on the level of the distinction of a society that treated reproduction as a natural law, versus a society that now treats it like an absolute existential choice. This is more and more needed I think.

And then what you were saying about women, Daniel, about the woman being biologically set up to a situation where she has to confront some of these paradoxes, like simultaneously giving birth to a friend and an enemy. It's interesting to think about it that way because I think Nietzsche would also think about it that way, because Nietzsche did sort of situate women having children and being a parent in relation to raising the Overman. And so this whole process of biological reproduction is connected to the idea of the Overman, and that does seem to require a maturation process, from childishness to childlikeness. It is certainly easier for men to be in a situation where they can permanently delay that process. There is a way in which the man's biological body is operating on a sort of repetition which could in principle be a sort of timeless childishness as opposed to a constrained childlikeness. And so on that level, I think we do need to also open up

conversations in our society about how to do that. In the past, I think natural necessity would force a situation where men would have to mature, and I think now there is more of a possibility to create an environment where that process can be endlessly delayed.

So connected to that, Nietzsche does not say that everyone should get married. In fact, he says that for many, marriage is a little dressed up lie which covers many lacks and general self-discontent. And I've seen that, I mean, I've observed that closely. However, he also wishes that men and women would relate to each other with the compassion for the suffering of a disguised god. And claims that if your thirst for the creator and the longing for the Overman speaks in your will for marriage, then that is holy. And that can be used as a garden for the surplus of reproduction. So it is impossible to say that Nietzsche is pro being single, or pro getting married. It's not about that. It's more about, I suppose, the intrinsic motivation of your evaluation process. And I think that's like really a general feature of Nietzsche's thought, that helps us really get at what he's pointing towards.

But in this context of the emphasis on, first men and women relating to each other through the lens of suffering and compassion, I think this is connected to what Michelle was saying about sexuality today being severed from suffering. Our culture actually needs to do the reverse, the way of thinking about sexuality connected to suffering, and connected to that desire for marriage being a holy longing for the Overman, that there's something absolutely sacred about marriage, and that is related to reproduction and new life. How do you think this framing might help us rethink marriage today?

Michelle: This question makes me think of so many things. I was talking recently about romance being our new

mysticism. I think it's risky when we make gods out of people, instead of seeing the god-likeness in the person. We shouldn't try to make them a God, right? This is what I think honesty would be the lie that Nietzsche is saying marriage can often be a lot of time for people. They kind of just want to fill that space in their heart and their soul. They want to just sort of use the other person to be there with everything, or to meet and fill that vacuous feeling they have. And I'm not trying to dismiss all that romance holds, and all of its beauty, and all of its wonder, and all of its fun, and everything like that. But the unintentional risk of it is that it ends up being a lion that you basically just project all of your hopes and dreams on this other person. And you expect them to fulfil it for you. And then when it turns out that you're not perfect, they're not perfect, and they will never be able to fulfil all you actually need to create yourself, then it's very disillusioning and it's very painful, and it's very unsustainable, honestly.

So I think that it is much better to really be critical of that mainstream dating culture, and the fact that people often marry to complete themselves in the other person. I don't think we should think about there being 'one' out there, but more like there is this 'one choice,' to make a commitment to another person for a long term partnership, or a marriage, and that one choice does in a sense make you complete a work together in your relation toward what you're building. But it's not as if that person is going to complete you because you can still feel loneliness within a committed partnership. Or you will definitely feel negative feelings come up. When Nietzsche says the lie hides lacks, those lacks are still going to come up to the surface. Then the lion doesn't cover it anymore or won't do that. It won't be able to cover anymore all the stuff that surfaces. Because guess what? The deeper you go day in, day out of repetitious relationships, because there is repetition, all those lacks surface. You can get creative in relationships,

but sometimes that fails, and that's hard. You have to get creative again and not despair. Well, you'll despair, but don't give up. You keep going.

The pressure cooker of marriage and long-term relationships brings up all that stuff you were able to ignore or not face because you never had to face the truly other right? It's easy to say people are different, it's harder to actually experience difference, and learn how to reconcile those differences when you actually have to live a life together as a couple, as a whole family. So I think if you ignore lack you are going to ease the suffering. There will always be pleasure and pain. But if you acknowledge the suffering, if you acknowledge upfront this idea of compassion and suffering, that you are basically both stuck. There is just something in our condition that we will encounter and experience suffering even in the fact that we have need. Or take specifically our sexual needs. That's a need that people have and I think that marriage was an avenue for that, and it was a typical avenue for that. Now that comes with risks because when anything is like a default assumption, then all of the thoughtlessness can crop up around it, which makes it bad, which makes it not so good, right. But when I think about the other avenues cropping up today, I think what are those avenues? Are they sufficient? Can they take the place of marriage?

But anyways, marriage as an avenue today, I think that it is this acknowledging of each other's needs, and helping to meet those needs, not simply of what can I get out of them, and what can they do for me, but rather to acknowledge that we actually have this sort of need to create. In a sense that need to create comes from lack, but it's kind of a propelling of the creation. It makes you want to do something. It makes you want to innovate and make stuff. So basically it's not going to work if the other person is used to just fulfil all your needs. However, when you

recognise that we have this lack that propels us to creativity, then I think you can acknowledge both of your places of need. But also both of your places of love, creativity, and of generation and in generating the things that you're doing, the things that you're creating. And so in that way, you come into the playing field of that relationship much more honestly, where you understand that neither of you are a god, but you may have god-like drive to create, and god-like infinite hunger and the need of all those things.

Ultimately, I think the couple should be helping each other to find the god within themselves. It is not going to be like you can just get it from the other person but what you can get is inspiration and encouragement to continue to find yourself. And so in a way, yes, you're meeting each other's needs, but you're kind of helping each other to go back to what is in your control, because you can't control if the person makes you coffee in the morning. I mean you can if you force it. But all the things that are just human idiosyncrasies, that you want or need or like want them to do for you well, and there's a place for talking about that, but the overarching idea is of us being creative beings and therefore the relationship starts with this idea that creativity will also include suffering, will also include failing, will also include times when it doesn't feel, you know, alive and fun and easy. It's going to be really, really hard.

But in that hard act, it's also something you feel a great sense of accomplishment in, and you don't give up. You don't give up through the despair and you continue forward and you continue to make a beautiful space in marriage or a long-term relationship in coming to understand the suffering, understand that and not just put all the emphasis on the pleasantries, and all of the things that are lovely and wonderful. And yes, there's a place for all that beauty too, but if we kind of think today we need to kind of include

more of that, that sense of suffering in it, and understand it's not suffering for just being masochistic or trying to suffer for suffering sake. It's because in the suffering there is the incredible heights of beauty and wonder and just something that you feel like you're making that's worthwhile and that you can always do no matter what. Nobody can take that from you. You can still do it. And I think there's something really neat about that, and I think that's to me where I think marriage holds a really beautiful and holy place.

Daniel: That does make me think of passion, you know Jesus on the cross, passion, but also resurrection. We have that double language that's very important. A few things. We should also note that before birth control, not getting married would have required a lot of being childlike as opposed to childish, right? You know, because to be single or to be like Nietzsche or an other enlightened being would require a significant element of self-denial. Whereas today, since it is possible to use birth control, that dynamic has changed. As you've noted, technology is very important. However, to speak positively, birth control allows us to ask the question: 'Do you want to have children'? Is that going to fulfil you? And the option of birth control makes us enter the 'want' language. We said earlier that 'want' can feed on the side of childishness. So what would it mean to birth will, to will the will to birth, you know, what would that mean? Because I think that language like 'wanting birth' which you can control, so you get it when you want it, therefore it doesn't demand anything of you opposed to willing it. What would it mean to will birth? And there is something about that that would be your will to cultivate inspiring being.

I think this can also get into marriage, where Nietzsche had noted that people were seeking marriage because they wanted to be married, where Nietzsche had noted that people were seeking marriage because they wanted to be

married, right? So there was a kind of fulfilment. Well what would that mean to will marriage? To will it by your own evaluation, by your own principles, by your own intrinsic motivation. So Nietzsche's exactly right. People can use marriage to escape themselves. People can use it to find fulfilment, to take their problems and make them someone else's problems, as opposed to marriage being a space in which you cultivate inspiring beings, or people who are inspired, who inspire other people. You know you have language with love that can be problematic. Even though I understand what people mean. Like they would say 'I would be nothing without you.' Well I understand what that means, that could be quite good, but do you really want to be married to someone who would be nothing without you? That's quite a heavy burden. That's quite a problem. And also they might be very needy. They might not be an individual who has cultivated that self to be able to sustain marriage.

So on the one hand there are a lot of people who say, look for girlfriends, look for boyfriends, look for marriage. I'm not going to say that's always bad, but you really want to examine your own motives. What is your why? Why are you looking? What are you looking away from? Because whenever you're looking for something, you're looking away from something, right? And so what are you looking away from? It's important not to marry a mask. And it's also important not to be a mask that somebody marries. So that will get into the question of transparency. That will get into questions before someone marries you. Another piece of it, I guess, would be to say make sure you are not someone that one day people will be like, well, "I didn't know that about you." And not in a sort of exciting way, but in a sort of 'you tricked me,' type of way, right? Like, oh, that's no good. You want to make sure that when somebody marries you, they are marrying you. Now you change. I'm not talking in a Platonic sense. I'm saying of

course you are becoming, but there's a lot of people who get married, and feel tricked and it's very important not to let that happen. Also, it's very important that people get married and not feel smothered.

Now I think feminism in some respects is trying to talk about that. When they say women get married and then they can't have a career, and they should be able to have those things. The problem is unfortunately that feminism has fallen into a lot of what Nietzsche warned about, which is utilitarianism and economic values. It's like, 'oh, the women are realising themselves if they're doing something useful to society, or if they're doing something you know that makes money,' right? You know if we're talking about making sure that any particular woman feels like she can evaluate, according to her own values of marriage, that's an extremely important thing, and it's extremely important for the male to do that as well.

So to bring this point to a close, the key is that marriage, and I think also for children, is to think of it like a garden. You want to create an environment where everyone in the family is blooming, if you will, to their maximum capacity. Does the rose need the hydrangea? Does the hydrangea need the daffodils or different things like that? Well, it needs them to make the entire scene inspiring, beautiful, grand, but the rose can grow on its own, right? But if the rose grows on its own, then the garden is mediocre. It's just got this lone rose bush and then a lot of dirt. So you want to have the sum, but also in creating the environment where the things can grow together, keep in mind that everything has to blossom as itself. So thinking about marriage as a space for cultivation of a kind of inspiring being and a phenomenology of time that feels in a certain way very different from looking for fulfilment or a final resting place, or a place to hide from yourself or to find the

meaning of your life.⁵¹⁰ Those are you. You don't want to say, look to other people to find the meaning of your life. You want to be someone that inspires other people to find the meaning in their life. You want to help people in those different ways.

So to think about marriage as a space for the cultivation of inspiration and evaluation and intrinsic motivation is I think a better angle to take on it.

Cadell: That's great. I mean if we really think about the core of Nietzsche, it is this sort of pointing towards the necessity of confronting your own intrinsic motivation and your own processes of evaluation, I'm a little disappointed that Nietzsche didn't spend more time thinking about marriage and children, like there should be a book about marriage and children. You know but obviously he wasn't the person to write it. Maybe you two are the people to write it. You know that's a possibility, I mean I am talking to the right people here. I am holding this conversation with the two of you for a reason. This might be the beginning of something.

The point being, it is clear to me, that if you want to look for the source of the intrinsic motivation and processes of evaluation, you want to look at that space, not only of childhood, but in genital maturation, that space where you were originally attracted to the other, and how that made you behave and move. I remember the first women I wanted a relationship with, the way I would go to their house for a date, or the way I would prepare for that date, was just an absolute overflow of intrinsic motivation. I couldn't get there fast enough. But that is really the thing.

⁵¹⁰ One might look to an understanding of the 'star' described by Andrew Sweeny (Chapter 24) for a vision of what a 'garden' of marriage might accomplish as a source of renewal, hope, refreshment, and inspiration—embodied reality

When you reflect back on those behaviours and motions. There is something really alive there, operating there, which most people get severed from because of the disappointment, the heartbreak, because they didn't find that final resting place, that absolute fulfilment. The other was just the mirror for a confrontation, about finding that drive in yourself.

So I think that is what Nietzsche does help us with philosophically. He may not be the guy to write the book on marriage and children, but he was the guy to write the book on the spiritual self search, and finding that intrinsic motivation inside yourself and that's what perhaps he was really really here to help us with.

There are so many things you two said that I could maybe elaborate on, but I think that really focusing, just for the readers, that in bringing your attention to the intrinsic motivation and process of evaluation as it relates to the other. You really want to think about those problems within the context of what I would call "libidinal economy." Because you're really going to find the source of your drive there.

Now we are at the final question. Thank you both for this process and I think this last question is going to close us well to be honest. Today we live in a world where long life into old age is perceived as a higher or even the highest virtue. I remember watching some movies about the ancient world, and there were never people who were really thinking about living until 80. They were thinking about dying on the battlefield or childbirth. But now we do have this idea that we are going to live until 80, and that's how I am going to plan my life. Now Nietzsche is someone who's going back to the older traditions, in the older ways of thinking, and he actually disagrees with this idea that long life in itself is good. Now it's not saying that if you live

a long life it's bad, but he's not saying it is in-itself valuable. Living a long life is not in-itself good. He says, actually, that we should "die at the right time." And then what does he mean by "dying at the right time?"

Well, he says that we should die at the right time, which means we should be with "a goal and an heir." More specifically: "a goal being passed on to an heir." I think that's really interesting to think about in the context of many of my struggles in building up my career, because one of the things that I've struggled with is finding older men who are willing to pass on a goal with an heir. It seems like we're in a society where the older generation has this fantasy of living forever, and so they never look for a true heir, or sacrifice the sacrifice required to pass on to the next generation. I think that's really one of the biggest generational and developmental problems in our culture. You get this feeling like I'm interacting with a bunch of older children who have this fantasy of living forever, whether stated explicitly or not. And that brings a lot of existential distress. But I think maybe you two will have a perspective on this that hits even closer to home.

So how would you interpret this ethic in relation to the experience of getting married and becoming parents?

Michelle: Thanks for sharing your thoughts as well, throughout this discussion. It's been really great to hear your insights as well.

I'm going to take a little bit of a different approach. I am going to get back to the question more specifically, but first, in being a parent. I think about death differently because, especially being a mother to young children, and seeing they are very close and attached, they just attach to me naturally. It's kind of like you are attached quite physically and literally with the umbilical cord. And then the baby is

on their own and they learn more independently as time goes on. I didn't think about death in college, in my 20s, before I was a mother, but now it's like 'wow,' there are these little lives that are more dependent on me, and they love, and they want and need me. So it does elevate parenting suddenly to an existential dimension which is a lot more difficult to face. But yet we still have to face it.

I think again something I really appreciate about Nietzsche is like don't be afraid to do the hard things, you know? It's the hard things that often birth weight to new life, and all of the goodness. Even in the scripture, Jesus says my burden is light, my yoke is easy. These things are the suffering and challenge for new life and wonder and the flow state. All of the things that would be considered lovely, pleasant, enjoyable. But anyway the point is more with children that it makes me realise, "Ok, yeah, I still don't control life." My days on earth are numbered and I don't control how many I have. But what I can control is what to do each and everyday with the children and those around me.

And recently, we had this unexpected passing in the family, and for me it was kind of really putting things in perspective. Because I think sometimes it's easy to just think as if you're going to live forever. There is something about death that is just such a good organising principle because when you realise that you're going to die, you don't have just endless days to offer your best, right? Now we are all humans, we are not going to offer our best every single day. We are going to make mistakes, we are going to make mistakes, but don't give up, you can learn from those mistakes. Why not try to start doing better today? Because you don't know if you're going to live another day. You don't know how long you are going to live for. So I think there's something to me about Nietzsche and this idea of dying at the right time, that puts a lot of emphasis

on the things you know you should do. I know he is not much of an 'ought' philosopher, but in a way he does want you to do the right thing in relation to intrinsic values, right? Your own intrinsic drives and what you want to make, and what are the things that you're doing that are kind of contrary to the things you actually do.

How can you hold your own, your own valuations of life. I think there is something about death that kind of puts me back on the right track, if you will.⁵¹¹ What are those overarching goals? What is it that I want to offer people? I want to treat people with respect, and all of those things, because it's kind of like your chance to do it and you don't know when it's going to end. It's not a paranoid thing. It's actually a really really great thing, because it kind of makes your time valuable. Do stuff now that you value and that you want to offer other people. Do you want to offer things to people that are hurtful or could potentially hurt them or could offer them something that they can take with them into their own life as like a little candle with whatever you're doing. So with the children, I think about that.

Just offer them the love and the nourishment that the presence and the attention that you can in however long you have. Hopefully that will be many, many decades. But you just don't know. And so with that in mind, the fact that we are finite often puts things majorly into perspective, because then I'm like 'Oh right, what do I want to be doing with my time'? What am I, what am I building towards? How do I want to enrich my friendships and my relationships in a way that is as best as I can offer? Offering the best that I can and even sometimes the best that you can is to say, "Look, I'm just kind of a miserable failure of a human." But that's also part of what it means to be human. And you can see that and you can know your

⁵¹¹ This may remind us of Owen Cox's central message "from hell" that death has a message calling man to new life (Chapter 5).

friends and your relationships, they can resonate with that and say in those times they're the ones who are offering their candles. So I keep going, don't give up, you know. And so anyways, I think that's what I would say on that.

Daniel: Very nice, Michelle. Well Cadell, it's always a delight to speak with you. Thank you for your work that you have done on Zarathustra and Nietzsche in general. I think he is in desperate need of being illuminated and his relevance brought to people for today. So thank you for doing that.

If your goal is to live a long life, you will fail. Let's say you live to be 90. 90 is a short period of time compared to the age of the Earth, and all the generations that have passed. Nobody actually lives a long life. So it's a doomed mission from the start. Also, too, if I told you that you could sit in this room right here, this room for 100 years, would anyone want to do that? Of course not. Because they know that would probably be hell, right? So quantity, a long period of time, everybody knows when you put in an example like that, is a dumb goal. You want quality, right? If you were to literally just have a whole lot of time, that would be awful. So everyone knows that you want quality. But the issue is that the thought kind of falls into the back of our mind, as we're planning our life and we're thinking what we're going to do and where we will end up.

Do you want to live? Is the goal of life to live a long life? We would also say no. What ends up happening practically, that is how we live. And that's something Nietzsche realised. You know that words are very often just red herrings. What we say we believe and think is not what we believe. It's what we do. What we do is what we believe. And unfortunately we have a culture that has people practice as if their goal is long life.

A few more things. We have lost mentorship. We have lost the culture of older people telling people you know how to live their life and helping them. This should be expected though. If basically we say, "Hey, if you work for a bunch of years, once you get to 60, you get to be childish again," you know, you get to go have fun. You get to travel. Like basically retirement is a return to the womb in some respects. You get to go back to not having responsibility; you get to go back to being childish. So why would any older people take the time to sit down with younger people and help cultivate them? This is my retirement, I'm not going to work with you. I'm going to go have fun because that was the whole economic package. So you have an economic package that doesn't have elders cultivate childlike people in the Nietzschean sense, because they've worked. The whole idea is that they work hard to go back to being childish. So then there's no space for that.

The other problem is wisdom, or passing down of wisdom, only makes sense in a culture of evaluation. If the only knowledge is technical, how to work a job, how to advance in your career, then well what's the guy at the diner going to tell you Monday morning? You know he doesn't know how to do computer science. He doesn't know how to work in a technical field. So he can't help you, right? And if there is no wisdom because there's no evaluation, no intrinsic values, and there's nothing beyond money, well, then there's little place for mentorship culture other than job training. There's a lot of job training, there's a lot of old advisors and consultation and counselling. But all of that is unfortunately saying that wisdom equals utilitarianism. And that is what Nietzsche warned about. Wisdom as a category only makes sense in a culture of nobility, where you have a noble ethic. Where you're teaching people what to find is worth living.

Now Nietzsche very famously thinks Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates were giant mistakes, and that the Greeks were better off with Homer and Achilles, and so on. And that's very interesting when you go back to say Homer and you're reading his work. There is a notion of the beauty of the battlefield, the goodness of the warrior, the truth of the fight. You find the truth of men, you find the truth of people on the battlefield. You know those three infinities in Christianity you see in this kind of battle context. There is more to say here, I recently spoke with Raymond K Hessel recently on rhetoric and thymos in Achilles, and I think that's an important subject. But I'll just note that so there's this kind of idea that there's something about battle, something about the fight. Something about rising to the occasion that brings together the good, the beautiful, and the true. And art as well, because the art of battle. There is a way to view Nietzsche's ethics in terms of an aesthetic view of how to live a beautiful life, not just a moral life. But beauty had to be tied to Achilles in the skill of the battle.

A mentor culture would be where older people cultivate in younger people how to rise to the occasion of life. How to rise to the occasion of being thrown into this world as a human being and having to figure out what you're going to do about it. So that would get us into the question of what is the human being and what is life? Well, if we follow Nietzsche, the human being is the being who finds fullness in creation, in the creation of their own value. And being a child in the world is the opportunity to be that child who gains the ability to evaluate, as opposed to absorb the secondhand smoke of that zeitgeist, and live according to those values. And the main thing that this brings out is the facing of fear and the ability to face status anxiety.

And a wisdom culture would be one that helps people be courageous, helps people bear the difficulty of their values, and the challenges of their everyday life. And facing fear

seems to be a lot about wisdom. And there's an interesting line in first John that says "the one who fears is not made perfect in love." And in *Beyond Good and Evil*, there's a very important line where Nietzsche says "love is always beyond good and evil." And so the one that loves is beyond good and evil, and that means love is nobility. And so the facing of fear is the cultivation of love, which is the cultivation of nobility. And that makes sense because we are motivated by what we love and if we are able to say this is valuable, by definition that is a motivating act. So the ability to face fear and to declare, and take a stand on the field of battle, battling the social pressures to just think in terms of the economy or the state, like Achilles fighting that zeitgeist, fighting those pressures with the art of living that we would call good, beautiful, and true. That is the ability to say this matters and you face the fear so that you can say that. And by doing that you love it and you have a motivation to live and at that point you can be the self turning wheel.

Cadell: Well that was a great way to wrap it up. I think if I need to add anything to that, I would just like to emphasise what Michelle was saying about death as a great orientation principle. We can bring things full circle with some of your early reflections on the entire process of becoming a mother, becoming a parent, because you are literally looking at your own successors. You are looking at the people who will replace you, and who will grow up, and have their own lives which are truly beyond you, and that's something that you can never experience without becoming a mother or a father in the deepest sense of the term.

Daniel, of course I like what you were saying about quantity being a dumb goal. But it's really in our culture that we have this idea that living a long time is the maximal value. And even to the point in the transhuman community, where they have the abstract goal of 'longevity escape

velocity,' where you just keep living longer and longer and longer until you live forever. And it's a philosophically silly idea, of course.⁵¹² But the first thing I would like to connect this with, which is worth saying because the next Philosophy Portal course is Hegel's *Science of Logic*. What Hegel achieves in the Science of Logic is understanding the meaning of quantity, where he starts with you having quality being processed through quantity and abstract forms of mathematics. He claims the mathematicians themselves have missed that the very processing through quantity leads to a new quality that you didn't have before. So the end process is about quality, not just endless quantity. That quantity leads to a new quality. And so in that context of living a longer time today, compared to Homer's day, where you would expect to die on the battlefield, or in childbirth, or just from brutal natural limitations, there is something that brings the three infinities of the true, the good, and the beautiful, there. Now, in large part because of scientific modernity, we have this natural extension of quantity. We are not dying at 20. In a previous epoch I would have died in childhood from pneumonia. With extended quantity we have to think the middle years, and our intrinsic motivations, when it comes to marriage and children and being with the other, and how do we make sure that our intrinsic motivation systems and our processes of evaluation are thought through as opposed unthought social mediations, where we've just based everything on imitation and mimicry, and remaining consequently in a very childish state as opposed to a childlike state?

And so the final point for me is, I think there is a more interesting dialogue to be had at the intersection of

⁵¹² For a deeper critique of transhumanism, and also an argument for the concept of hyperhumanism, see Carl Hayden Smith's contribution to this anthology "Overbecoming" (Chapter 19).

Nietzsche and Christianity.⁵¹³ And I think that I am trying to search for the place where that conversation might be held. But I just appreciate that both of you, I think, hold that space, for that conversation to exist. So thank you both for that.

Daniel: This has been a magnificent conversation and that we always appreciate what you have to say. Your mind, your life, your spirit, your intrinsic motivation, your evaluation, you are a living example of all of those things. All things are always new with you. So thank you for that, Cadell.

Cadell: My partner might not always agree, but I try to be the free-spinning child, as opposed to the childish. But of course, she sees some of the childish as well.

⁵¹³ See again, "Philosophy After Nietzsche" (Chapter 25).