**Summary of Untimely Meditations by Friedrich Nietzsche**

To put it shortly, Untimely Meditations revolves around the ruminations of the author, Friedrich Nietzsche, about the human tendency of moving ahead in life as a herd instead of showing any proactivity in letting their uniqueness stand out. These so-called ruminations find its roots in the answer of a distant traveller who was posed a question- what quality in men he had discovered everywhere he had gone; his answer to the question being- ‘laziness’.

Nietzsche assumes that the traveller’s answer may have been very distinct as compared to that of most people, whose answers would mostly sum up the fact that humans are timid and hide behind the cloaks of customs, traditions and conventions. He claims that despite getting just one chance to live in a world so variegated, a person tends to hide the traits that sets him apart from a crowd like “a bad conscience”, and reasons that he does this out of “fear for his neighbour”, or, in other words, he fears ostracism from society. He further reasons that very few people have this innate fear out of modesty. Nietzsche also believes that most people shy away from being themselves and indulge in herd mentality out of “indolence” or “laziness”, thereby backing up the traveller’s astute answer to the initial question. The laziness that is being spoken of, according to Nietzsche, refers to the hesitation to face the inconveniences and troubles that an outspoken person potentially brings along with him, considering the fact that one has to be honest and frank with himself in order to *be*himself in front of a world that contains all assortments of people. He (Nietzsche) personifies the conscience as someone who speaks to the human body. In his words, the conscience always says: “Be yourself! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself”, while also claiming that every youth hears this voice and trembles when he hears the voice, for the liberation that he attains after paying heed to this voice comes at the cost of trying to fetter the “chains of fear and convention”. Nietzsche also says that such a man who gives up on fettering these chains and evades his genius is like an empty kernel and compares him to a decked-out ghost who does not even inspire pity, much less fear.

Friedrich Nietzsche then wonders how the future generations will have the legacy of a generation of “pseudo-men” who lived a life based on other’s doctrines and opinions and how posterity will want nothing to do with such a generation. However, despite commenting on how the current generations would not want to be hopeful about the current times and would want to simply kill their time and perish with it, Nietzsche concludes his reverie on the note that despite a possibly bleak future, the fact that people exist in the present- in the here and now- should be the biggest incentive for them to live according to their own ideologies. He puts the responsibility of each man’s life on his shoulders and says that since they have one chance to exist, and since every life comes to an end, they should probably try and live it in a rather bold manner. He ends with a rhetorical question that is worth pondering about- “Why go on clinging to this clod of earth, this way of life, why pay heed to what your neighbour says?”

My response: -

Friedrich Nietzsche, in his “Untimely Meditations”, covered themes that many writers would not have even thought of. And even if they did, very few would actually weave their writings around such a sensitive topic. The problem of herd mentality and the sheer disability of people to be expressive about their own thoughts and opinions is something that plagues society even today. And with the infusion of social media with our day-to-day life, this problem has only been getting worse. When people assume a persona when they want to be accepted by a group of strangers they interact with, on social media platforms, they are basically living up to Nietzsche’s near-dystopian worldview. The excerpt also goes well in sync with the course of “English Communication”, since communication is all about expressing oneself on any platform.

What I appreciate most is his seemingly bold and unconventional fashion of putting his points across, while also being impactful at the same time. “The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily… …chains of fear and convention” is, in my opinion, one of the many sentences from this excerpt that supports my claim. However, while I agree with the excerpt on a lot of its points, I am in disagreement with the last paragraph of the same. I am of the opinion that truth has its limits, and simply being a gunslinger with no second thought of self-preservation, just because a person only lives once, is not only imprudent, but also foolish. Moreover, using the reason of life being evanescent to be foolhardy basically invalidates why anyone does anything with their life, since the same reason can also be used by people to simply while away the time they have in their hands, since “everything is temporary”.

Despite my disagreements with these parts of the excerpt, I would still claim that Untimely Mediations is still quite a transformative paragraph, and I would say that everyone should at least try to work on the life lessons imparted by the excerpt.