

ICPR Workshop on WORKS OF NIETZSCHE: ON THE GENEALOGY OF MORALITY

**(To be conducted from 21st to 30th March 2017 at the ICPR Academic Centre, Lucknow)
(Last Date of Applying is 20th Feb., 2017)**

Theme Note:

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the 19th-century German thinker has exercised great intellectual and spiritual influence on the 20th century even though he was notoriously unread and un-influential during his own lifetime. A specialist in classic philology and science of theology, Nietzsche in his brilliant but relatively brief career as Professor of Philology at the University of Basel, Switzerland, published numerous major works of philosophy.

Relativist, atheist, existentialist, Nazi - all have been said of Nietzsche, some with more reason than others. He is an author who embraced many contradictions and it is not surprising that he should have influenced thinkers of an extraordinary variety ranging from philosophy and psychology to fiction, poetry and drama. This is partly a function of his style, which is epigrammatic, literary, and sometimes elusive to the point of enigma. A fervent philosopher who was anti-democracy, anti-Christianity, anti-Judaism, anti-socialist and a self-acclaimed Anti-Christ, Nietzsche expressed his belief in a master race and the coming of a superman in many of his works. Nietzsche is regarded as a major influence on 20th century philosophy, theology and art. His writings on individuality, morality and the meaning of existence influenced many major thinkers and writers of the 20th century including existentialism like Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault; Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, two of the founding figures of psychiatry; and writers such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse.

Epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, aesthetics—Nietzsche had distinctive things to say about all the traditional philosophical topics; he often said them in an untraditional way. It may well be true, as one commentator suggested, that Nietzsche's books are easier to read and harder to understand than those of almost any other thinker. A trip through Nietzsche's books will reveal wildly disparate claims about truth, chastity, the Germans, Wagner, the Jews, morality,

science, art, and Christianity—to mention a few topics that absorbed his attention.

He is rightly regarded as one of the great masters of German prose with preference for aphorism or very short essay. Most of Nietzsche's books are really a series of aphorisms or extended aphorisms strung together. For Nietzsche, the aphorism was the favored companion of insight: nimbler and more eloquent than discursive argumentation.

Published in the 1870s, his first books, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and *Human, All Too Human* (1878), reveal the strong influence of the writings of philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer and the composer Richard Wagner. The following decade (1880s) was a highly productive period for him as a thinker and writer. His most significant works, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and *Twilight of the Idols* (1889) were published during this period. In these works of the 1880s, Nietzsche developed the central points of his philosophy. One of these was his famous statement that "God is dead," a rejection of Christianity as a meaningful force in contemporary life. Others were his endorsement of self-perfection through creative drive and a "will to power," and his concept of a "super-man" or "over-man" (*Übermensch*), an individual who strives to exist beyond conventional categories of good and evil, master and slave.

On the Genealogy of Morality (1887)

A fascinating book which follows on many of the themes of *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality* is arguably the most systematic and coherent of Nietzsche's works. It is unusual because it is less aphoristic, but rather three essays. The essays have more structure and extended argumentation than is typical in most of Nietzsche's works. The Genealogy is the most sustained of Nietzsche's later works and offers one of the fullest expressions of his characteristic concerns. The book deals with the two absolutely central questions namely what's wrong with our morality and the problem of suffering.

A book which was meant to sketch the evolution of morals over the centuries, we also looked at questions about the nature of truth and why we value truth; how science and religion have no claim to truth and also how we can make the most of our lives. This versatility of topics makes the Genealogy the most forcible, ambitious and amazingly mature work of Nietzsche, bringing together reflections on topics that span the prior decade.

The aim of this ten day workshop can be stated as: Look at the text in detail and locating it in the intellectual and social climate of the 19th century legacy of ideas and beliefs, as well as more generally at the issues raised by Nietzsche and their unfolding in the 20th century philosophical traditions. The workshop aims thus to trace both the historical and philosophical responses to key questions raised in On the Genealogy of Morals authored by Nietzsche- Nietzsche's trenchant criticism of values, religion and traditional morality- reason, freedom, equality, sympathy and the proposed new approaches to morality, knowledge, art, culture and philosophy.

The workshop will work around questions of Ethics, Religion, Aesthetics, Will to power, Superman, Interpretation etc. through a close reading of the text as well as getting expert insights into what might be called the Posthumous influences of Nietzsche.

The workshop is open to all interested in the works of Nietzsche with a P G Degree, particularly, teachers and students of philosophy (limited to 30 nos.)

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