

Th 529: NIETZSCHE AND CHRISTIANITY, Spring, 1994

Final examination. Time: Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m.
Place: McGuinn 334
Duration: 2 hrs.

Students will be asked to answer two out of the ten questions that follow. In each case, supply the proper framework and explain Nietzsche's thought. Do not bring any books or notes for the exam session.

1. In the *Twilight of Idols* (PN, p. 515), Nietzsche writes: "They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality.... When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet." In the same vein, he states in the *Will to Power*, #18, that "those who have abandoned God cling that much more firmly to the faith in morality." On the basis of these assertions discuss Nietzsche's critique of nineteenth-century liberal thought.
2. Explain in what sense the world that Nietzsche announces and to which he looks forward is strictly speaking a "post-Christian" world, i.e., a world that both presupposes and transcends Christianity. Differently stated, what did Nietzsche see as the essential contribution of Christianity to the development of his new philosophy and in what sense does Christianity, although transcended, remains an essential ingredient of that philosophy?
*asceticism
→ saved will
will to desire
shall be
→ power
→ life*
*ascetic ideas
- a thorough training which allows us to take step*
3. In the *Antichrist*, No. 19 (PN, p. 586), Nietzsche complains about our inability to create new gods: "Almost two thousand years -- and not a single new god!" How do you understand Nietzsche's statement and in what sense can Nietzsche's own philosophy be said to be an attempt to create new gods?
*gods too philosophy
not with only creation/valuation
human → god*
4. Discuss the nature of Nietzsche's atheism as expressed in his famous dictum, "God is dead." How does this brand of atheism differ from all earlier forms of atheism, both ancient and modern?
5. Discuss the difference between the theoretical historicism of the early part of the 19th century and the so-called "radical historicism" propounded by Nietzsche, e.g., in his essay *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*.
*we don't have
faith... look
at death
→ Most free
death & life is a truth*

6. In the *Will to Power*, # 2, Nietzsche writes: "What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism* (Nietzsche's emphasis). What does Nietzsche mean by "nihilism," in what sense does his own philosophy claim to be rooted in the experience of nihilism, and how does he propose to overcome that nihilism?"

phil.
science
god
morality

Now, most will agree... to LIFE

why suffer
- equality
but, no more
... great still
will in the end
as it is to be

7. Explain what Nietzsche means by the "will to power." To what does he oppose the will to power? What is the link between this notion of the will to power and Nietzsche's attempt to regenerate modern humanity?

nature?
... / daily
transcendence ~ 'self-overcoming'

8. Discuss Nietzsche's critique of modern liberalism. What does Nietzsche see as the essential characteristic(s) of modern life as exemplified by the "last man" as presented in the Prologue to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*?

no chaos / conflict => no self-contempt, no creativity / longing
life has become too easy ('watered down')

no rule / no obey - "No shepherd / I herd")
theoretical historicism

9. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, #202, Nietzsche declares that "the democratic movement is the heir of the Christian movement" (Nietzsche's emphasis). Implied in this statement is the notion that modernity does not have a principle of its own but is a bastardized product of an earlier, specifically Christian tradition. Discuss the pros and cons of this controversial thesis.

highest (= Mach) vs. equality; scholar

equal; live according
to Nature (Roman's
with savage)
is a removal of all
natural phenomena
interpreted as signs
of goodness of God

10. Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* is famous for its attempt to explain the origin of traditional moral ideas. According to Nietzsche, what are the two great types of morality that have predominated thus far and what is wrong with them from his point of view? In particular, what does he think of Christian morality or the morality of the love of neighbor?

11. Discuss Nietzsche's relationship to Socrates, "the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history" (*Birth of Tragedy*, #15). Why is Socrates so important to Nietzsche and in what sense can Nietzsche be said to have resurrected him?

happiness, winter, reason

Argued between Karma Duty + Utilitarianism (greater good... etc.)
Now Modern vs Ancient (Some have even found Socrates' arguments more convincing than Nietzsche's)

12. Nietzsche's philosophy is not only a new philosophy but a new *type* of philosophy, one that paradoxically asserts as true the thesis that there is such a thing as the truth. What is Nietzsche's proposed solution to this apparent contradiction?