**Questions Week 5:**

**Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 –1900) - passages on religion and morality and extracts from *Also sprach Zarathustra***

After having had a look at some central motifs of Marx’s critique of capitalist modernity, with Friedrich Nietzsche we are now moving on to look at a very different kind of writer, in terms of his political orientation as well as his theories and the form they take. Most of this week’s material is from his *Also sprach**Zarathustra*, published in four parts between 1883 and 1891. Its main character is named after the Iranian philosopher Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism, the official religion of Persia from 600 BCE to 650 CE. Nietzsche’s prophet has very little to do with what we know about the real Zoroaster, however, and can safely be regarded as entirely fictional.

We will talk about *Zarathustra*’s unusual form later. First, though, I’d like you to look at two extracts from other works by Nietzsche that are a little more conventional in style and give us an impression of his views on the culture of his time and on the role of religion and morality.

GROUPS 1 & 2 (Hannah, Rachael, Ciera, Helen, Sophia)

1. **From ‘Schopenhauer als Erzieher’, §1, in *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1874)**

Nietzsche gives here a diagnosis of his time. Look at the metaphors that he uses: Which different kinds of processes and movements are described? What picture of the historical moment emerges? How does he describe the potential/desirable function, and how the actual role, of intellectuals in this situation?

GROUPS 3 & 4 (Danielle, Sarah, Bill, Gina, Natalie)

1. **From *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (München: Hanser, 1954), ‚Die »Verbesserer« der Menschheit’**

**Section 1:** What does he mean with a region ‘jenseits von Gut und Böse’ (incidentally the title of another one of his books) where the philosopher should take up position? Given that he thinks that ‘es keine moralischen Tatsachen gibt’, why does it still make sense to even look at moral judgments – can we learn anything from such an investigation? Or: why does he describe moral systems as ‘Symptomatologie’?

**Section 2:** What does the comparison of moral ‘Verbesserung’ with ‘Zähmung’ say about Nietzsche’s view of morals? Which features of human life are valued in this section, and what kind of life is disparaged? What image of human beings emerges from it?

1. **Extracts from *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883 ff.)**

***Zarathustras Vorrede***

GROUPS 5 & 6 (Ellie, Jamie, Nadia, Ryan)

**Section 1** (p. 277): How is Zarathustra portrayed here? What associations are connected to the image of him going “ in das Gebirge” for ten years? Who or what is he compared to? How are his relationship to other people and his ‘mission’ portrayed in this opening section?

**Section 3** (pp. 279-281): The *Übermensch* is a notorious, and notoriously elusive, concept of Nietzsche’s. What do we learn about him here? Through which analogies is his image developed?

What does Z mean when he exhorts his Brüder: “Bleibt der Erde treu”?

What’s wrong with ‘Behagen’ – which attitudes does Z demand instead in the ‘Stunde der großen Verachtung’ (bottom p. 280-p. 281)?

GROUPS 5 & 6 (Ellie, Jamie, Nadia, Ryan)

**Section 9** (pp. 289-290): What is Zarathustra’s relationship to the ‘Herde’/the ‘Volk’ and the ‘Hirten’? What is the relationship of his desired ‘Gefährten’ to the ‘Herde’? Where in that picture are the ‘Guten und Gerechten’ and the ‘Gläubigen aller Glauben’ located? What do the ‘Tafeln der Werte’ allude to? What picture of religion and morality does this section paint?

***Die Reden Zarathustras***

GROUPS 1 & 2 (Hannah, Rachael, Ciera, Helen, Sophia)

*Vom neuen Götzen* (313-315)

Who is the ‘neue Götze’ the title talks about? How does Nietzsche portray the state here? What picture does he paint of the ‘Viel-zu-Vielen’ and the ‘Überflüssigen’? Which social institutions are being criticised here (esp. p. 315)? What image of modern society emerges, and of how the intellectual should relate to it?

GROUPS 3 & 4 (Danielle, Sarah, Bill, Gina, Natalie)

*Von der schenkenden Tugend* (336-340)

**Section 1**: In this section, the virtue of ‘schenkende Tugend’ is opposed to ‘kranke Selbstsucht’ and ‘Entartung’ – which qualities and activities are associated with each side of the opposition? What is the difference between ‘heilige Selbstsucht’ and ‘kranke Selbstsucht’ (337)?

How does this section describe the relationship of ‘Leib’ and ‘Geist’? ‘Erhöht ist da euer Leib und auferstanden’ (337) – does this remind you of anything? What is the function of this allusion in the context of *Zarathustra*?

GROUPS 5 & 6 (Ellie, Jamie, Nadia, Ryan)

**Section 2** (338-339): What might Z mean when he commands his disciples ‘die verflogene Tugend zur Erde zurück[zu]führen]”? Which images are associated with the past in this section, which with the future?

**Section 3:** In his speech to his ‘Jünger’, Z says ‘Nun heiße ich euch, mich verlieren und euch finden; und erst, wenn ihr mich alle verleugnet habt, will ich euch wiederkehren.’ What does he mean with his encouragement that the Jünger should lose him and find themselves? What does the theme of ‘verleugnen’ allude to?

**ALL:**

What do you think of the style and genre of this text? Does the style remind you of any other important texts?

Does Nietzsche present a theory here, or literature – or perhaps something else? Comparing this text with Marx might be helpful here. Is it possible to disagree and argue with either Marx’s or Nietzsche’s texts? Which attitude does *Zarathustra* encourage in the reader? Does the form of the text have anything to do with its content?