

## PHD STUDENT, PHILOSOPHY, GERMANY

The project, which I have begun this year, is an examination of a critical social and philosophical problem which is brilliantly treated and perhaps resolved in the work of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. I have fulfilled all the requirements for my Ph.D. program, including exams, and my proposal has been approved by my advisor. Thus I plan to finish the project next year and hope to do so in Germany. Since I have done a considerable amount of work on Nietzsche already and I am thoroughly familiar with his work, this is a very reasonable timetable.

The problem I am dealing with is this: In philosophy there is a raging debate between dogmatic realists, those who believe in truth, knowledge and radical contingency of our lives and the world on the other hand. The political and social debate between conservatism and liberalism, which is an extension of this intellectual debate, is one of the central issues which define our age. One might consider, e.g., the tension between a church, which holds fervently onto the idea of an objective order and thus to objective, absolute values and the populous, who are gradually becoming convinced of the contingency of their lives and also the church doctrine.

In many ways, Nietzsche is at the center of this struggle, strangely enough providing grist for the mills of both sides. How could this man be considered conservative to the point of being a fascist, and at the same time be the inspiration for the French post-structuralism and post-modernism, one of whose main beliefs is the radical contingency of everything? The answer is that he has been consistently misunderstood and misrepresented. What's more, I am convinced that his perspectivist epistemology offers an alternative view to both objective realism and radical relativism. As a perspectivist, he claims that there are only perspectives and thus that absolute, objective knowledge is impossible; but he also holds that some perspectives are better than others and can be determined to be so, thus denying relativism's claim that there are no privileged positions. In this way, Nietzsche provides an answer to a critical social and political problem, and thus I feel there is a certain urgency to my project.

A significant part of my research must be completed in Germany since the thesis of my project has much to do with the unstated influence of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer upon Nietzsche's perspectivism. Hence it is crucial that I have access particularly to Nietzsche's archives, his notes and unpublished work in order to determine the extent of this unacknowledged influence. Similarly, it is important that I have access to Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer archives. Fortunately, I have been accepted by Professor Rudiger Bubner at the Philosophische Fakultat, Universitat Tubingen. I have chosen Tubingen because of its long intellectual history and philosophical importance. Further, I have chosen it specifically to work with Professor Bubner, in his own right an important German philosopher. My work at Tubingen would primarily consist of writing, researching, accessing the resources of the university and the city, and consulting with Professor Bubner.

Beyond the scope of my dissertation, studying in Germany will also provide me with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of Germany as a society, a culture and as a wellspring for the long philosophical tradition in which I find myself. Further, the understanding of Germany which I would gain in such an experience would be an invaluable part of my desire on the one hand to extend the intellectual tradition in my own work as a scholar, and on the other hand to pass this tradition on to my students in the classroom.