

KNTV: PHILOSOPHY FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Programme-related questions (and answers)

1. Where was Nietzsche born, and when was he alive?
(He was born in Prussia, and lived from 1844 to 1900.)
2. Why was the German Nazi party drawn to Nietzsche's ideas?
(They liked his idea of the supremacy of the superman, and set out to destroy those people whom they saw as weak.)
3. How did Nietzsche envisage the superman? How well did he fit into this mould himself?
(He thought individuals should become as strong as they could in mind, body and spirit, and should stretch themselves to the limits of their endurance in order to rise above weaker people. Nietzsche was nothing like a superman. He had poor health, suffered a bad accident, was lonely and isolated and eventually went mad.)
4. What was Nietzsche's opinion of Christianity?
(He saw it as a restrictive morality, and thought that organised religion was dangerous because it permitted weak people to steer strong people in the wrong philosophical direction.)
5. What are two of Nietzsche's most famous quotes?
('God is dead.' And 'That which does not kill us makes us stronger'.)
6. What were Nietzsche's opinions of women?
He was brought up in a female household, and praised women in his early works. However, he later became more critical of them. He never married, although he twice proposed marriage and was refused.)
7. What were the national characteristics of the Prussians, and how well did Nietzsche conform to the ideals of Prussian society?
(They were known as a militaristic nation of people who obeyed authority and were well-organised and modest about their achievements. None of this chimed with Nietzsche's personality, and as a young man he gave up his Prussian nationality and became stateless.)
8. Why was Nietzsche so frustrated by society?
(He saw life as a struggle. He thought that people could never come out on top unless they stopped looking for help from God, but rather learned to rely on themselves and develop their own powers.)
9. Which notable Germans inspired Nietzsche?
(He was influenced by the ideas of philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and by the operas of composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883).)
10. What happened to Nietzsche in 1889?
(He went mad and collapsed on the streets of Turin. He never regained his sanity.)
11. What did Nietzsche believe was the greatest power that people can have?
(He thought that self-control was crucial, and that the most important power people can have is power over themselves, rather than power over others.)
12. What 20th century branch of philosophy emerged from Nietzsche's thinking?
Existentialism, which argues that humans are isolated in a hostile universe, and each person must find his or her own meaning while remaining aware of the inevitability of death.)