

ICGC SOUTH ASIA SEMINAR SERIES

The Martyr and the Madman: Friedrich Nietzsche and Mansur Ibn Husain al-Hallaj in Iqbal's Javednama

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Wednesday, April 24 | 3:30 - 5:30 pm CT

537 Heller Hall (ICGC) | Live stream @ icgc.umn.edu

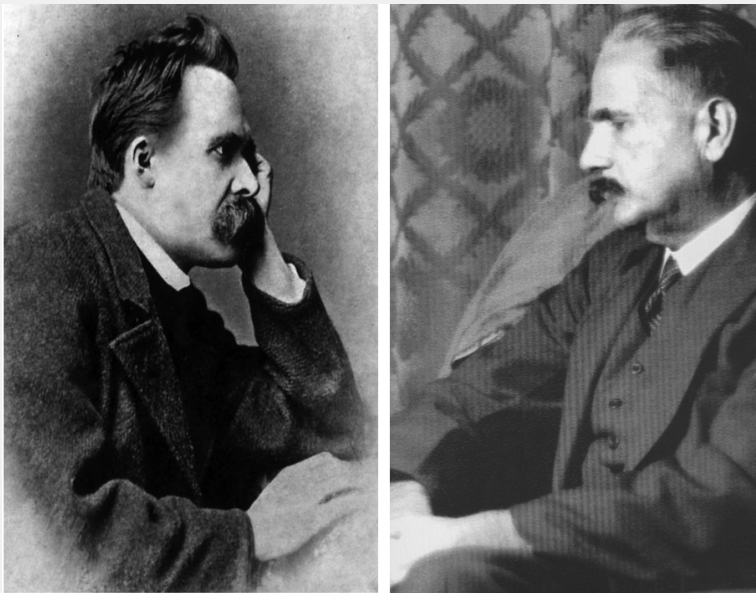


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Abstract: How can a finite ego participate in eternity? This is Iqbal's guiding question. This paper argues that the conjunction of who Iqbal considers the thinker of individual self-affirmation, Mansur ibn Husain al-Hallaj with the thinker who has for him the most positive view of immortality, Friedrich Nietzsche allows him to finally address this question. This conjunction appears in the Javednama, Iqbal's final attempt to understand how the finite could become immortal. There are two sets of obstacles to this: a) Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence as a "permanentizing of presence" makes his concept of eternity the culmination (vollendung) of the Platonic tradition. Thus eternal return is a permanentizing of presence, how can it allow us to conceive of time as 'creative unfolding'? Iqbal also notices this in his Reconstruction where he bluntly designates Nietzsche as a failure and a thinker of fatalism and b) Massignon's reading of Hallaj as the Muslim Christ, hence the individual becomes the locus for a process of identification, "the intermittent identification of subject and Object" that is in its metaphysics Hegelian and in its religious imagery Christian. The individual becomes the locus for an indefinite play of dialectical identification. Iqbal achieves a conjunction between ana'l haqq and the Eternal Recurrence. In bringing them together, in reflecting them into each other, Iqbal introduces a fracture into the dialectical identification of Massignon by introducing the pure empty form of time that refuses identification into Hallaj's cry of self-affirmation, and makes Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence a process of selection where only those who can say ana'l haqq return, and thus makes it creative of novelty.

Graduate student discussant:

Kanha Prasad, PhD student, History

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