



Press Release

Philosopher in Focus

The University of Freiburg opens the first German-language Nietzsche Research Center

Even now, 175 years since his birth, interest in the life and works of the accomplished philologist and posthumously famous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche remains high all around the world. So the University of Freiburg has decided to establish a Nietzsche Research Center (NFZ). The center is the first in the German-speaking region and combines specialist knowledge from the fields of philosophy, philology, theology, law and medicine. "We want to use Nietzsche as a sort of sounding rod in order to research the world of the 19th Century," says the philosopher Prof. Dr. **Andreas Urs Sommer** from the University of Freiburg's Department of Philosophy.

The goal of the center is to go beyond the well-trodden paths in casting light on the life, work and thinking of Nietzsche. This includes the indexing of Nietzsche's wide-ranging reading matter, as well as a digital-genetic edition and commentary on Nietzsche's immense legacy. They also want to clarify the question of which disease Nietzsche really suffered from, "This has been a recurring question since his death, and is in fact a mystery," Sommer declares. Academics are now considering whether the mortal remains of the philosopher could be studied, to stem speculation about his suffering. In addition, they are planning a wide-ranging research initiative to record the history of Nietzsche's impact in Germany and France, as well as a cooperation with the Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto on the subject of "Nietzsche in Japan", reflecting on the early adoption of Nietzsche's writings there.

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— Together with an international commission, the university will review the results of these projects and cooperations involving the NFZ every three years. “Naturally we would like to position the center sustainably for the long-term and also develop teaching with a greater offering on the 19th Century in the form of lectures, seminars and workshops,” explains Sommer.

The NFZ is part of the Upper Rhine Association Eucor. So researchers from Mulhouse, Strasbourg, Karlsruhe and Basel can become recognized members of the center at any time with no bureaucratic hurdles. The Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities also has institutional connections with the NFZ. Currently the plan is in future to expand existing financing by attracting outside funding.

Photo: 175 years since his birth, interest in the life and works of Friedrich Nietzsche remains high all around the world. / orion_effstock.adobe.com

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