

The Flesh Made Word: Toward a Philosophy of Autobiography



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Bio : Aakash Singh Rathore is a professor, author and an Ironman triathlete. He has taught at various universities around the world, including Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Universities of Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad (India); Rutgers, Pennsylvania (USA); Toronto (Canada); Humboldt-Berlin (Germany); LUISS-Rome (Italy); and Louvain (Belgium). He is also Chief Editor, *B. R. Ambedkar: The Quest for Justice* (five volumes, Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2019), and the author of *B. R. Ambedkar: A Definitive Biography* (Macmillan, forthcoming, 2020).

Abstract: This seminar will discuss a diverse range of global autobiographical literature with an emphasis on the (re)presentation of the physical body. The diversity ranges from philosophical autobiography (Nietzsche), autobiographies of self-experimentation (Gandhi and Mishima), literary autobiography (Hemingway, Das) as well as other genres of autobiography, including the graphic novel (Spiegelman, Satrapi), as also documentations of tragedy and injustice and subsequent spiritual overcoming (Ambedkar, Pawar, Angelou, Wiesel). In exploring different literary forms and orientations of the autobiographies, we remain constantly attuned to the flesh, a focus generally absent from literary criticism and philosophy or study of leading historical personages, with the exception of patches within phenomenological philosophy and feminism. The seminar will delve into how the authors treated here deal with the flesh through their autobiographical writing and in what way they embody the essential relationship between flesh, spirit and word. We will analyse some seminal texts such as *Ecce Homo*, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, *Waiting for a Visa*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *A Moveable Feast*, *Night*, *Baluta*, *My Story*, *Sun and Steel*, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, *MAUS* and *Persepolis*..

Date: **31 Jan 2019, Thursday**

Time: **4:00 pm – 5:30 pm**

Venue: **A 106, R & D Block**

