

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

THE WILL TO ABUSE:  
The Nazis' Misuse of Nietzsche

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## ABSTRACT

Friedrich Nietzsche's work has been tainted for over 100 years because the Nazis misrepresented his ideas. I am going to explore how and why the Nazis misused and abused Nietzsche. I also plan to show, that the material the Nazis used was presented to them by Nietzsche's anti-Semitic sister Elisabeth. I intend to show through an examination of Nietzsche's works that the Nazis' use of Nietzsche was a great deviation from what he actually taught in his works. I will conclude that not only would Nietzsche have been appalled at the Nazis' use of his works and his name, but that we need to remove this black mark of Nazism from Nietzsche's record and look anew at his actual philosophy.

## INTRODUCTION

Friedrich Nietzsche was a 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher who has been widely misunderstood for over 100 years. People, who know very little about Nietzsche, typically know at least one of two “facts”: that he contributed to the Nazi movement and/or that he was the philosopher who said, “God is dead.”<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, however, has been misrepresented as having been an important influence to the Nazi movement; although the Nazis used some of his works, upon closer inspection it can be shown that the Nazis manipulated Nietzsche’s works to fit their ideas. One difficulty lies in the fact that Nietzsche was dead by the time the Nazis were in power. Therefore, it is impossible to know what he would have done. But one can speculate based on the ideas presented in his published works and his reaction to the anti-Semitism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that he would have been appalled at being paired with the Nazis.

I will show in this work that Nietzsche should not be identified with the Nazi movement, that the Nazis misappropriated his work, and that his sister, Elisabeth, is the link between the misrepresentation of Nietzsche’s ideas and the Nazi party. In the following three chapters I will examine Nietzsche’s significant relationships, analyze distortions in his works, and explore the use of Nietzsche by the Nazis for propaganda.

In Chapter 1, I intend to show through an examination of his personal letters as well as by examining how he lived his life that Nietzsche was not an anti-Semite nor a nationalist. Based on his relationships, Nietzsche quite simply did not fit into the Nazi mold, and would not have supported the Nazi party. The four relationships that will be

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (New York: The Modern Library, 1982), 6.

examined all ended badly. Nietzsche broke from his dear friend and father figure, the famous composer, Richard Wagner. Two good friends, Paul Rée and Lou Salomé, broke from Nietzsche. And Nietzsche again broke from his best-friend and sister, Elisabeth Förster -Nietzsche. We will discover how Nietzsche felt about certain topics by looking at why these relationships fell apart, as well as how these break-ups affected him.

In Chapter 2, I will demonstrate that Nietzsche rejected four important elements of Nazism. I will refer primarily to Nietzsche's published works and *The Will to Power*, showing that there are important discrepancies between the published works and *The Will to Power*. The published works include those works of Nietzsche's that were ready to be published before his death, that is, those over which he had editorial control.<sup>2</sup> Using the texts that were in publishable form before Nietzsche's death as a criterion by which *The Will to Power*, published in 1901, can be measured we will examine what Nietzsche wrote about these four elements of Nazism: anti-Semitism, racism, nationalism, and war. We will discover that the supposed precursor of Nazism did not agree with any of the primary ideas that were perpetrated by Hitler's Nazis.

Finally, in Chapter 3, I will uncover who was using Nietzsche to promote Nazism, how they were accomplishing this task, and the common theories of why the Nazis would use a man who did not support their views. All of these questions will be answered by looking at different groups of people. One of the groups that abused Nietzsche's works were intellectuals, such as Baeumler, Benda, and Oehler. Another group comprised of

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for list of published works. Those that were published after 1888 are possibly less credible because they were in Elisabeth's hands before they were published, however they are commonly believed to have been edited by Friedrich Nietzsche and approved by him for publication before he collapsed. Therefore, they are believed to be credible by most scholars.

political leaders, such as Hitler and Goebbels. Finally, we will see that current neo-Nazi groups still associate themselves with Nietzsche's name. Even though Nietzsche was not around to see his works being used by these groups of people we will discover that he would not have approved of his name being paired with their causes.

## CHAPTER 1

## NIETZSCHE'S RELATIONSHIPS IN LIGHT OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Friedrich Nietzsche had few friends throughout his life, therefore those he did befriend were of great importance to him. His relationships give insight as to who he was and what he believed. It seems as if the relationships that were particularly important to Nietzsche ended up badly. Why these relationships came to an end are extremely important in discovering that Nietzsche was not an anti-Semite.

## Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche (known as Fritz) was born on October 15, 1844, in Röcken, Germany, to 31-year-old Ludwig Nietzsche, a Lutheran pastor, and to his 18-year-old wife, Franzika Nietzsche. When little Fritz was five years old his father died, and a year later his two year old brother died as well. In her grief Franzika moved with her two surviving children, Fritz and Elisabeth, to Naumburg to stay with her mother-in-law and late husband's two sisters.<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche grew up in Naumburg and, never socially at ease, had a very small group of friends that importantly included his younger sister, Elisabeth.<sup>4</sup> Along with his father, both of Nietzsche's grandfathers were Lutheran pastors, and Nietzsche was nicknamed "little pastor" because he so often quoted verses from the Bible.<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche was an extremely intelligent child, and at age fourteen received a scholarship to the *Gymnasium, Schulpforta*. *Schulpforta* was an academically elite

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<sup>3</sup> William Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ivo Frenzel, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Weastern Publishing Company Inc., 1967), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Mandel, "Introduction" to *Nietzsche*, by Lou Salomé (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), xiv.



school, which challenged its 200 students to achieve a comprehensive background in the humanities, and to regard highly the characteristics of diligence, discipline, and a Spartan way of life.<sup>6</sup> From 1858 until 1864 Nietzsche lived and studied at *Schulpforta*. He started every morning with an assembly of prayer, then bread and butter for breakfast, followed by eleven hours of classes, lectures, recitations and studying. Nietzsche concentrated on theology and philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

In 1865 Nietzsche went to a university. He studied under the philologist,<sup>8</sup> Professor Friedrich Ritschl at the University of Leipzig. Here Nietzsche started a philological society, started writing on Greek ideas, and studied philology under Professor Ritschl.<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche was also interested in music, and tried his hand at composing, though he never became much of a composer. Despite Nietzsche's failure as a composer, Professor Ritschl's wife, Sophie, praised Nietzsche for his musical knowledge and for his ability to Richard Wagner. Following a discussion about this Nietzsche was invited to one of the Wagners' soirées on November 8, 1866; this was the first time Nietzsche met Richard Wagner and Cosima, who would one day become Wagner's wife.<sup>10</sup>

But despite this budding interest in music, Nietzsche was pulled in yet another direction. In 1869, he was offered the chair position for the Greek language and literature department at the University of Basel. After being in Basel for only one month,

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<sup>6</sup> Frenzel, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Mandel, "Introduction" to *Nietzsche*, by Salomé, xv.

<sup>8</sup> Philology is the study of the classics, such as Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, etc...

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, xvi.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, xx.

Nietzsche made his first trip of many to visit the Wagners at their villa in Tribschen.<sup>11</sup>

The relationship with the Wagners reveals much about who Nietzsche was and what he believed.

Dear Father and Friend Richard Wagner

Having grown-up in a predominantly feminine environment, Nietzsche longed for a father figure. Notably, Richard Wagner was born in the same year as Nietzsche's father, and was 31 years Nietzsche's senior. Nietzsche was finally able to fill his need for a father figure with Richard Wagner. Wagner became Nietzsche's beloved mentor in 1869 when Nietzsche was 24 years old. Richard and Cosima Wagner adored Nietzsche and his intelligence, and Nietzsche spent most weekends at the Wagner's villa in Tribschen for the next decade.<sup>12</sup> This became such an important relationship on both sides that the Wagners even built an apartment for Nietzsche at the villa.<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche and Wagner conversed about the current themes in the academic world and they edited each other's works.<sup>14</sup> Even beyond all the evidence of the closeness of this relationship, Nietzsche expressed his attachment to Wagner in a letter he wrote from Basel to Wagner in May 1869: "Very honored Sir, how long I've wanted to express, for once without any

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, xxii.

<sup>12</sup> Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 17.

<sup>13</sup> Mandel, "Introduction" to *Nietzsche*, by Salomé, xxii.

<sup>14</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 18.

reserve, the measure of my gratitude to you. Truly the best and loftiest moments of my life are linked with your name..."<sup>15</sup>

At the Bayreuth festival in the summer of 1876, Nietzsche and Wagner had a falling out that ultimately brought their relationship to a halt two years later. This break is important because I intend to show that Nietzsche broke away from someone who was obviously very important to him because he did not support Wagner's anti-Semitism and nationalism. Nietzsche himself talks about his reasons for leaving the festival in a letter dated July of 1878.<sup>16</sup> He writes, "Now in every way I live striving for wisdom, and whereas before I only idolized wise men..."<sup>17</sup> One summer at Bayreuth I became fully conscious of all this."<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche goes on to say that he left the festival for the mountains to start the writing of a book that would one day be published under the title, *Human All Too Human*, and only returned to the festival because his sister, Elisabeth, desired his presence.

Nobody really knows what happened, but there are various theories as to why Wagner and Nietzsche split. These theories are either based on what Nietzsche and Richard and Cosima Wagner wrote, or on what Elisabeth Nietzsche, his sister, wrote on the topic. There are many theories, but those who were directly involved in the split may be trusted to best reveal the truth of the cause. Weaver Santaniello, author of numerous books and articles pertaining to Nietzsche and the Nazis, has a four-part theory on the

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<sup>15</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self Portrait from His Letters*, trans. and ed. Peter Fuss and Henry Shapiro (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 9.

<sup>16</sup> This letter was addressed to Mathilde Maier, a mutual friend of Nietzsche's and Wagner's, who was from Mainz. She met Wagner in 1862, and may have been one of his many lovers.

<sup>17</sup> More specifically Richard Wagner and Arthur Schopenhauer.

<sup>18</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self Portrait from His Letters*, 45-46.

topic of this split that has a positive correlation to Nietzsche's letters and Cosima Wagner's diary entries, and it is appropriate to quote extensively from this author on this theory,

Regardless, it is clear that Nietzsche's break with Wagner was extremely painful and was caused by (1) *Nietzsche's discontent with his friend's anti-Jewish prejudices and his conviction that Wagner's pro-nationalism, which was vigorously seeking public approval, was dangerous*, (2) his realization that Wagnerian art was not fated nor suited to be the salvation of European culture, and that Wagner himself was not the redeemer, (3) the fact that Nietzsche, like Wagner, was egotistical, longed to be a free spirit and cultural savior, and thus believed he needed complete independence from his Master, and (4) Wagner's conversion to Christianity repulsed Nietzsche and sealed the breakup once and for all.<sup>19</sup>

Nietzsche often times speaks out against anti-Semitism and nationalism, both of which were strong beliefs of Wagner's. "...[Wagner] had condescended to everything I despise—even anti-Semitism."<sup>20</sup> "...if he were aware of everything inside me that militates against his art and his aims..."<sup>21</sup>

Immediately after the split between Wagner and Nietzsche, each spoke some harsh words about the other. Nietzsche, however, often thought fondly of his time spent with Wagner, he even recalled later that he was happiest at this point in his life. Years after the split it is clear through his ongoing interest in the Wagners, that Nietzsche was still emotionally attached. This man was the only father he ever knew. In a letter to

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<sup>19</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> *Nietzsche Contra Wagner, The Portable Nietzsche*. The original passage appears in the preface to *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, intro. Erich Heller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), quoted in Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* 22. This passage comes from the published book that Nietzsche started to write that day he left the festival.

<sup>21</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters*, 44.

Malwida Von Meysenbug<sup>22</sup> in January 1880, Nietzsche expresses his emotional connection to Wagner:

Any news from the Wagners? It's three years now since I've heard from them. They abandoned me too; I knew long ago that Wagner, as soon as he realized that our aims had diverged, would do just that...I am still grateful to him for having inspired me to strive passionately for independence of spirit. Frau Wagner, as you know, is the most appealing woman I've ever met.<sup>23</sup>

Wagner never forgave Nietzsche for leaving him, and shortly before his death Wagner said, "Nietzsche had no ideas of his own, no blood of his own. What flowed into him was other people's blood."<sup>24</sup> This reference to "other people's blood" is significant. The National Socialist Party (Nazi), used this idea of blood to propagate mass genocide on a number of ethnic groups, such as the Slavs, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Belorussians, the Gypsies, the Russians, and most famously the Jews. Wagner made another particularly anti-Semitic statement about blood that would have appealed to the Nazis. "[E]ven mixing [Jewish blood] does not harm it; man or woman, if he marries into races most foreign to his own, he will always produce a Jew."<sup>25</sup>

Wagner not only agreed with the Nazis about blood, he was also a fervent anti-Semite and German nationalist. Wagner displayed his negative feelings about the Jews in

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<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche met Meysenbug at Bayreuth in 1872. She was an author and one of Wagner's friends. In 1876-77, she rented a villa in Sorrento as a retreat for herself, Nietzsche, Paul Rée, and Nietzsche's student Albert Brenner.

<sup>23</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait*, 51.

<sup>24</sup> Cosima Wagner, *Diaries*, vol. 1, 1869-77, ed. Martin Gregor Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trans. Geoffrey Skepton (London and New York: 1978), quoted in Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 36. Cosima Wagner recorded this statement in her diary on February 4, 1883.

<sup>25</sup> F. Kobler, *Juden und Judentum* p 333 quoted in Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism: From Voltaire to Wagner* (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1997), 448.

an essay that was first published in 1850, *Das Judentum in der Musik*.<sup>26</sup> According to Joachim Kohler, author of *Nietzsche and Wagner*,

[Wagner] claimed that only by elimination of this racial minority, already the object of extensive discrimination, could the way be cleared for the emergence of a new, truly humane culture. [W]hen anti-Semitism had become acceptable in society, he called it 'the grand solution', after which there would be no Jews left.<sup>27</sup>

We will see below, as is the case with Paul Rée, that Wagner lived what he believed; he did not like socializing with Jews. He constantly promoted Germans and made snide comments about Jews. In 1865 Wagner published another essay, this one was titled, "What is German?" According to Kohler, Wagner said in this essay that, "[H]e laid the blame for the shameful decline of German culture at the door of the Jews. The only hope of salvation, he claimed, lay in a return to the values of the 'characteristic German psyche.'"<sup>28</sup> Here we see that Wagner's beliefs actually coincided with Nazism, however, just because Nietzsche was once a close friend of Wagner's does not mean he held the same beliefs. In fact we should conclude the opposite; that Nietzsche was not an anti-Semite nor a nationalist. We should come to the conclusion that Nietzsche broke with Wagner because of these beliefs, such as displayed in the essay *Music and the Jews*, "The Jews," Wagner had said, "settled like teeming maggots on the rotting corpse of German art and caused it to decompose: 'the putrefying flesh is then fed upon by swarms of crawling creatures.'"<sup>29</sup> The language that Wagner uses when he writes about the Jews is very vulgar, and we will discover below nowhere in Nietzsche's writing do we find this

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<sup>26</sup> Joachim Kohler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson in Sugjugation*, trans. Ronald Taylor (London: Yale University Press, 1998), 71.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 71-72.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Wagner, *Music and the Jews*, 1869, quoted in *Nietzsche and Wagner* by Kohler, 95.

type of language used against the Jews, but we do find it when Nietzsche writes about the Germans. This is yet another example of Wagner's closeness to Nazi ideas and I also plan to show below how far away Nietzsche is from these Nazi elements.

Paul Rée and Lou Salomé

Perhaps most important in establishing Nietzsche's discomfort with the growing anti-Semitism around him is the fact that after Nietzsche departed from Wagner, his friendship with two Jewish people blossomed. He discussed academic topics with these two Jews; they were Dr. Paul Rée and Lou Salomé. Dr. Paul Rée, was also a philosopher, who worked and wrote on Aristotle's ethics.<sup>30</sup> When Nietzsche met Rée in Basel in the spring of 1873, Rée was still a university student who was working on his dissertation. Nietzsche was five years Rée's senior. In 1875, Rée's dissertation, *Psychologisch Beobachtungen*, was published. Nietzsche wrote a letter of congratulations to Rée on the publication of his dissertation, and Rée responded to Nietzsche, thus initiating their friendship.<sup>31</sup> Rée introduced Nietzsche to a female companion of his, Lou Salomé in May of 1882.<sup>32</sup> The three became close friends and referred to themselves in jest as the "holy trinity."<sup>33</sup>

At the end of October of 1876, shortly after the incident at the Bayreuth festival, Nietzsche and his Jewish friend, Rée, visited the Wagners. Sometime later that same week Nietzsche returned alone and went on a walk with Wagner. This was the last time

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<sup>30</sup> Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 48.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Mandel, "Introduction" to *Nietzsche*, by Salomé, xl.

<sup>33</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 31.

they ever saw each other.<sup>34</sup> Cosima's entry in her diary on November 1 of that same year, reveals that the Wagners did not appreciate having Rée in their home, more than likely because they figured out, "...on closer inspection...that he [Rée] must be an Israelite."<sup>35</sup>

It is clear from this diary entry that Wagner had very strong racial and anti-Semitic feelings. That Nietzsche did not show this prejudice is clear. We will see later that Wagner is not the only relationship that Nietzsche ends because of anti-Semitism, and we will see that Nietzsche does not break from Rée and Salomé because of any anti-Semitic beliefs that he holds.

His relationship with Dr. Paul Rée brought Nietzsche great happiness. This is evident in a letter that Nietzsche wrote to Rée in January of 1880, in which he wrote, "How much joy you've given me, my dear, my exceptionally dear friend! I've seen you once more, true to the memory I'd held in my heart. These six days have been like a continually pleasant drunken spree."<sup>36</sup> This friendship produced a larger social circle for Nietzsche when Rée introduced Nietzsche to his friend, Lou Salomé, and instantly Nietzsche was interested in this bright young girl. A letter that Nietzsche wrote to Rée in March 1882 portrays his interest. He writes, "Do greet that Russian girl for me, if you see any sense in it: I have a passion for this kind of soul. So much so, that I shall very soon go on the prowl for one."<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche eventually admits to his dear friend, Rée, that he has taken a liking to this young woman, Salomé. In the summer of that year Nietzsche

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid, 21.

<sup>35</sup> Cosima Wagner, *Diaries*, 1:931, quoted in Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait*, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 59; The Russian girl is in reference to Lou Salomé.



and Salomé spent time together talking about philosophy and about life. Reflecting on these times in a letter dated September of 1882, Nietzsche writes,

The most profitable of all my activities this summer were my conversations with Lou. Our minds and tastes are profoundly alike, and yet there are so many sharp contrasts that we are the most instructive subjects of study for each other. I've never met anyone else who was able to glean so many objective insights from personal experience.<sup>38</sup>

It is clear at this point that Nietzsche is enthralled with this young Jewish woman. He loves her spirit and her mind. Notably, these are some of the very characteristics he attributed to Wagner in the early years before his disappointment. We see later, however, that Salomé does not return Nietzsche's affection. In 1882, Friedrich, Paul and the young woman, Lou, planned to live together, but this never happened because of an animosity that came between them. Nietzsche's love for Lou put a strain on the relation when she refused not one but two of his marriage proposals. Salomé and Rée, however, remained companions for years to come, until Salomé married in 1887.<sup>39</sup>

Nietzsche's loss of his two friends, Rée and Salomé, was difficult for him and resulted in his growing isolation. This was a much different reaction than he had to the split with the Wagners. In August 1883 he wrote, "Judging by everything I've now learned—much too late—those two persons Rée and Lou aren't fit to lick the soles of my boots."<sup>40</sup> Even though Nietzsche did not end on good terms with his two companions of the "holy trinity" he eventually got over his anger. He said in a letter dated April 1884, that he was deeply hurt by their departure and was still not ready to see either one, but if

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 67. This letter was addressed to Franz Overbeck.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 75. This letter was written to Von Meysenbug.

they were in need he would indeed want to help.<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that Nietzsche did not separate from these two because of any anti-Semitic beliefs; it was because Lou refused to marry him, which caused the division between the three friends.

#### The Beloved Sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche

Elisabeth Nietzsche was two years younger than her brother Friedrich. They were great friends for most of their lives and Elisabeth adored her older brother. Nietzsche says warm things about his sister, and describes his life with her as, “wholly Nietzschean and remarkably peaceful.”<sup>42</sup> Elisabeth was an active member of the Wagner circle and remained so even after her brother left the group. What put a rift between Nietzsche and Wagner also came between brother and sister: anti-Semitic beliefs. Nietzsche put up with Elisabeth's Christianity until it became anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism once again caused Nietzsche to break off a relationship with someone he loved dearly.<sup>43</sup> The occasion for the break was Elisabeth's marriage to Bernhard Förster, an avid anti-Semite. *The Times*, in England, referred to Förster as, “the most representative Jew-baiter in all Germany.”<sup>44</sup> He even sent a petition to Bismarck with 267,000 signatures on it, that asked that the Jews not be allowed to hold government or teaching positions and that all Jews must register.<sup>45</sup> Elisabeth moved to Paraguay in February of 1886 with her husband to help form a German colony. This colony, *Nueva Germania*, was dedicated to the project of promoting pure Aryan breeding, Christianity, and a vegetarian diet. The colony did not

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>43</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 9-11, 24.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

fare well and Förster committed suicide; Elisabeth returned to Europe a widow.<sup>46</sup>

Nietzsche expressed his distaste for this colony in a letter of 1885 that he sent to his mother and sister in Naumburg, before Elisabeth left for Paraguay,

I'm uneasy about my sister's future. I don't quite believe in Dr. Förster's return to Paraguay. Europe isn't really all that small, and even if one doesn't wish to live in Germany (on this point he and I agree), it is by no means necessary to go that far off. Admittedly I've as yet managed to mount little enthusiasm for "the Germanic essence," and even less for keeping this "glorious" race pure.<sup>47</sup>

Elisabeth's choice in an anti-Semite for a husband revealed to Nietzsche that Elisabeth also held anti-Semitic beliefs. Nietzsche broke from Elisabeth shortly after her marriage. He simply could no longer fraternize with an anti-Semite. At various times and to various people, Nietzsche expressed the connection anti-Semitism had to the break with his sister. Nietzsche wrote to Gast that she was "maltreating him" by sending him letters with "anti-Semitic propaganda and anti-Jewish sentiments," and to Overbeck he wrote that these were the reasons that he broke from his sister.<sup>48</sup> He even wrote to von Meysenbug that, "...between a vengeful anti-Semitic goose and me there can be no reconciliation."<sup>49</sup> Nietzsche continues to explain how he detests his sister, "...[she] has ruined my finest victory over myself—so that I've ended up prey to relentless thoughts of revenge..."<sup>50</sup> Nietzsche himself says it over and over again, that he broke from his sister because of her anti-Semitic beliefs, yet we are to believe that Nietzsche was the biggest anti-Semite of all, one that helped create the ideology of the Nazis!

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<sup>46</sup> Ben MacIntyre, "The Philosophy of the Dangerous Sister," *The Times*, April 1, 1992 [database on-line]; available from Lexis Nexis, <http://web.lexis-nexis.com>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2005

<sup>47</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 86.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>49</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait*, 79.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 76.

There was in fact a Nietzsche who worked with the Nazis on spreading propaganda and was very much a part of Wagnerism, but it was not Friedrich. It was Elisabeth. Her actions upon her return to Europe were among the worst offences she could have made against her beloved brother.

Before Elisabeth's return to Europe, while she was in Paraguay, Nietzsche's mind had deteriorated. Paul Deussen, a distant friend of Nietzsche's, tells of a visit he had with Nietzsche in September of 1887:

On a beautiful autumn day, my wife and I, having come from Chiavena, climbed over the Pass of Maloja, and soon Sils-Maria lay before us. My heart was beating as I found my friend after fourteen years of separation and embraced him, deeply moved. But what changes had taken place in him. Where was the proud posture, the supple walk, the fluent speech? He dragged along with great difficulty, lopping to one side, and his speech was frequently heavy and halting.<sup>51</sup>

Nietzsche's final mental break happened on January 3, 1889, in Turino. He left his house and saw a man brutally beating his horse, Nietzsche, "Bursting into tears and wailing, he threw himself on the animal's neck and collapsed."<sup>52</sup> Franz Overbeck took Nietzsche to the Basel Sanatorium a few days after the January 3rd incident. The doctor in Basel diagnosed Nietzsche as, "Paralysis progressiva."<sup>53</sup> Franziska, Nietzsche's mother, joined Overbeck in Basel a few weeks later, and they took Nietzsche to a mental institution in Jena. Nietzsche remained in Jena until March of 1890 when Franziska was allowed to take Nietzsche from the hospital and care for him herself.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Deussen, *Reminiscences of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 91 quoted in Ivo Frenzel, *Nietzsche* (New York: Western Publishing Company, 1967), 102-103.

<sup>52</sup> Ivo Frenzel, *Nietzsche*, (New York: Western Publishing Company, 1967), 118.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Elisabeth moved into her mother's house in Naumburg in 1893, four years after Nietzsche collapsed in Turino, to help Franziska take care of her dear Fritz.<sup>55</sup> She decided at this time to change her name in Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche. Elisabeth tried to take control of the now mentally broken Nietzsche and all of the written material of his that she could get her hands on. She convinced her mother to knock out a wall on the ground floor of their home to create a room for a Nietzsche archive. Elisabeth started compiling Nietzsche's notebooks as well as works about Nietzsche in this "archive". By 1894, Elisabeth held soirées at the archive for those who were intrigued by Nietzsche's works.<sup>56</sup> Tension rose, however, between Elisabeth and Franziska, her mother. Franziska found Elisabeth's gatherings revolting. Klaus Goch, an author of books on the Nietzsche women, writes,

She (Franziska) must have slowly become conscious of the fact that Elisabeth was using her sick brother as a defenseless instrument and medium to satisfy her own craving for admiration and urge for fame and recognition.<sup>57</sup>

The war between the two women raged on, Elisabeth tried desperately to gain control of the care for Nietzsche. She tried to get the doctors to say that Franziska was not taking adequate care of Fritz; but the doctors refused Elisabeth. In 1895, Elisabeth moved out of her mother's house and continued to gather Nietzsche's written material. She started writing a biography of Nietzsche titled, *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsche's (The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche)*.<sup>58</sup> Franziska died in 1897, Elisabeth finally had physical control

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<sup>55</sup> Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 83.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>57</sup> Klaus Goch, *Franziska Nietzsche* (Frankfurt am Main : Insel, 1994) quoted in *Nietzsche's Sister*, by Diethe, 85.

<sup>58</sup> Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister*, 86.

over Nietzsche.<sup>59</sup> The two moved in to the Villa Silberblick in Weimer and Nietzsche “lived” with his sister for three years before he died on August 25, 1900. During this same year, Elisabeth used some of the material she had been gathering (that of which she approved) and turned the Villa Silberblick into the Nietzsche-Archive in Weimer.<sup>60</sup> What appeared to be a noble act of trying to keep her brother’s works alive, however, was actually a distortion of his work.

In April 1888, professor Georg Brandes of the University of Copenhagen gave a lecture course titled, “On the German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.”<sup>61</sup> Georg Brandes was a Danish Jew<sup>62</sup> who corresponded with Nietzsche for a year before his collapse, but never actually met Nietzsche.<sup>63</sup> Nietzsche’s work gained popularity in 1892 due to Brandes’ lectures.<sup>64</sup> Elisabeth wanted to sustain Nietzsche’s growing fame, and her own. She accomplished this by misrepresenting her brother’s ideas to fit her ideas, which supported the Nazi-power of her day.

She compelled Hitler into believing that her brother was at the heart of fascism, and Ben MacIntyre, author of “The philosophy of a dangerous sister,” says, “In return, the old lady and her archive received a stipend from the Führer’s personal bank account. When she died at 89, most of the prominent Nazis, including a visibly emotional Hitler,

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>60</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Frenzel, 121.

<sup>62</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 39.

<sup>63</sup> Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 465.

<sup>64</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 39.

attended her funeral.”<sup>65</sup> With someone this close to Nietzsche promoting the idea that he supported the “great Führer” and Nazism, it is easy to see how Nietzsche and Nazism ended up together. Nietzsche himself, however, broke away from people who were involved with what would become in time Nazi ideology, and in the works over which he had control he spoke out against anti-Semitism, nationalism, and brutality, all of which were at the heart of the Nazis’ ideology.

Nietzsche’s relationships and personal letters, however, help show us that he did not fit into the Nazi mold. When it comes to one idea which was at the center of the Nazi movement, he was not anti-Semitic. This has been shown through the close relationships he had with Wagner, Rée, Salomé, and Elisabeth, all of which ended for one reason or another. The reasons for the broken friendships in particular show that Nietzsche could not have supported the Nazis. The relationships with Rée and Salomé give us insight into how Nietzsche felt about befriending those who were Jewish. It also shows us their rupture did not cause Nietzsche to lash out against the Jewish race.

The main reason Rée and Salomé left Nietzsche was the tension that was caused by his love of Salomé and her rejection of him. The destruction of the “holy trinity” shows us many things. It shows that Nietzsche had very close friends who were Jewish, and indeed that he even fell in love with a Jewish woman. It also shows that the animosity between Nietzsche and Rée and Salomé did not lead to any display of anti-

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<sup>65</sup> MacIntyre, "The Philosophy of the Dangerous Sister," *The Times*, April 1, 1992 [database on-line]; available from Lexis Nexis, <http://web.lexis-nexis.com>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2005.

Semitic beliefs.<sup>66</sup> It is also important to note that of the four relationships explored here, these are the only two that Nietzsche himself did not breakup.

The reasons why Nietzsche broke from Wagner and Elisabeth show even more clearly that Nietzsche was an anti-anti-Semite. It is essential here to discuss why Nietzsche broke off his relationships with Wagner and Elisabeth. One theory is that Nietzsche left Wagner because of Wagner's supposed conversion to Christianity.<sup>67</sup> However, Nietzsche never broke off communication with his mother, who was herself a devout Christian. It is also significant that Elisabeth held onto the strong Christian upbringing Nietzsche and she had, and it was only with the development of her anti-Semitic beliefs that caused a rift to grow between them. Therefore, it was not Christianity that caused Nietzsche to break from Wagner and Elisabeth, but rather these two relationships that were terminated because Nietzsche could not stand the anti-Semitic beliefs that his dear friend and father figure, Wagner, and his sister, Elisabeth, held. This is clear in a letter that Nietzsche wrote to Overbeck, "The accursed anti-Semitism is ruining all my chances for financial independence, pupils, new friends, influence; it alienated Richard Wagner and me; it is the cause of the radical break between myself and my sister...".<sup>68</sup> It is clear on the surface of things that Nietzsche did not hold anti-Semitic beliefs. In fact, as we have seen he was passionately opposed to anyone who held such beliefs. This was also evident in his distaste for the notorious anti-Semite, Förster, who became his brother-in-law.<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche broke away from people who were involved with the ideology that would give rise to the Nazis, and in the works over which

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<sup>66</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait*, 68.

<sup>67</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 23.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 86.



he had editorial control he speaks out against anti-Semitism, nationalism, and brutality, all of which were at the heart of the Nazis' ideology. He simply could not continue to associate with people who held onto these beliefs, no matter how dear these people were to him.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN EXAMINATION OF NIETZSCHE'S WORKS

Nietzsche was inaccurately paired with the Nazi movement. The major reasons for this was that he was misused by scholars,<sup>70</sup> co-opted by the Nazi party, and suffered the greatest abuse from his sister, Elisabeth. It is commonly believed that Elisabeth manipulated her brother's notes in a way that would appeal to the Nazis. The result of her actions was the publication of *The Will to Power* in 1901,<sup>71</sup> which, for a time, was considered to be "...Nietzsche's philosophical *magnum opus*," according to Alfred Baumler, the editor of, *Wille zur Macht*,<sup>72</sup> "All the fundamental results of his thinking are brought together in this book."<sup>73</sup> "This book," was a one volume German edition of *The Will to Power*,<sup>74</sup> published in 1930.<sup>75</sup> The Nazis utilized *The Will to Power*, with cooperation from Elisabeth, to create propaganda which twisted her brother's works to promote Nazi ideas. The propaganda included, "...essential Nazi

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<sup>70</sup> Marius Paul Nicolas, *From Nietzsche Down to Hitler* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1970), 139.

<sup>71</sup> There were several editions of this book printed. Each edition was different, the length, number of volumes, and the number of notes included were different. 1901 is the first edition, which included 483 sections and including editors notes was 536 pages long. The second edition was published in 1906 and included 1,067 sections; there was a reprint of this edition in 1911, which included an appendix of notes on the manuscript by Dr. Otto Weiss. There was yet another edition that combined the 1906 and 1911 editions plus a table of approximate dates of when all 1,067 sections were each written, and some of Weiss' notes were omitted. There are several more editions of *The Will to Power*, but most of these others are now not held to be scholarly, for example the one volume edition by Baumler in 1930.

<sup>72</sup> Baumler was a Nazi, and a professor of philosophy in Berlin, during Hitler's reign.

<sup>73</sup> William Kaufmann, "Introduction" to *The Will to Power*, by Nietzsche (New York: Random House, 1967), xiii.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, xxix.

Nietzsche sayings,”<sup>76</sup> which led people to believe that Nietzsche was an advocate of National Socialism and an anti-Semite.

I intend to show that there are discrepancies between *The Will to Power* and the published works; this is due particularly because of how this book was edited. Nietzsche’s handwriting was so terribly that Peter Gast was the only person who could decipher the notes.<sup>77</sup> But one must understand the way in which Nietzsche took notes. There was no continuity in a notebook, because Nietzsche would write however he felt like, front to back, back to front, even from bottom to top. Another gross deviation was that in the editing of *The Will to Power*, what Nietzsche crossed out was not taken into account.<sup>78</sup> (See Figure 1). Elisabeth had everything deciphered that could be and then she helped place what she wanted into categories.<sup>79</sup> The liberties that were taken when editing Nietzsche’s notes to form *The Will to Power*, is what ultimately caused the misrepresentation of Nietzsche as a Nazi.

Upon closer inspection, as we have already seen, Nietzsche could not have been a supporter of the Nazi party. This is evident by way of his published works and the letters he wrote to his companions. The “published works” to which I am referring to are those that were written for publication before his death.<sup>80</sup> I will illustrate that Nietzsche was not a Nazi by showing that his ideas presented in the published works do not correlate with the Nazi propaganda found in *The Will to Power*.

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<sup>76</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, 148-149.

<sup>77</sup> Diethe, 83-84.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>80</sup> Refer to Appendix for a full list of the “published works.”



More specifically, I will show that Nietzsche did not agree with four significant elements of Nazism: anti-Semitism, race, German nationalism, and war. We have already seen through Nietzsche's relationships that he was in conflict with anti-Semitism. Through an examination of his works we will also see that this was a pivotal point of his philosophy; he simply did not agree with the ideology of anti-Semitism. We will also see through the published works that he thought the German race was weak, and that cross-breeding was the only way to improve Europe. Nietzsche also explained in his works that he did not support German nationalism, particularly the type that the Nazis preached. By looking at what Nietzsche wrote about his own experience with war we will come to see that his views on war were quite different than Hitler's were.

### Anti-Semitism

As editorially directed by his sister, Nietzsche supposedly proclaimed in *The Will to Power*,

...the Jewish instinct of the "chosen": they claim all the virtues for themselves without further ado, and count the rest of the world their opposites; a profound sign of a vulgar soul; a complete lack of real aims, of real tasks, for which one needs other virtues than those of the bigot—the state took this work from their shoulders: these impudent people nonetheless behaved as if they had no need of the state.<sup>81</sup>

In spite of this, those works which were published before his death, and over which he had editorial control, paint an entirely different picture of Nietzsche. Not only is he not anti-Semitic, he is in fact pro-Jew. Nietzsche frequently speaks out against the stupidity and vulgarity of anti-Semitism, while he praises Jews, both from the biblical and the

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<sup>81</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. William Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, ed. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), 116 (197).

modern periods. In his support of the Jews being absorbed into Europe he writes in

*Beyond Good and Evil*,

...[T]hey long to be fixed, permitted, respected somewhere at long last, putting and end to the nomads' life, to the "Wandering Jew"; and this bent and impulse (which may even express an attenuation of the Jewish instincts) should be noted well and *accommodated*: to that end it might be useful and fair to expel the anti-Semitic screamers from the country.<sup>82</sup>

"Slave morality", the main reason proposed by Nietzsche to explain the downfall of anti-Semitism, is the same reason he lashes out at Christianity and at priestly Judaism. Both Christianity and anti-Semitism show characteristics of what he calls "slave morality," one of which is resentment.<sup>83</sup> In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche poses the demise of the slave morality against the triumph of the noble morality to explain what he does not like about "slave morality":

The slave revolt in morals begins by rancor turning creative and giving birth to values—the rancor of beings who, deprived of the direct outlet of action, compensate by an imaginary vengeance. All truly noble morality grows out of triumphant self-affirmation. Slave ethics, on the other hand, begins by saying *no* to an "outside," an "other," a non-self, and that *no* is its creative act... Slave ethics requires for its inception a sphere different from and hostile to its own. Physiologically speaking, it requires an outside stimulus in order to act at all; all its action is reaction.<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, those who follow slave morality have to define themselves against another group—the other. In anti-Semitism and in Christianity/priestly Judaism, we see the distinction made between the two groups by determining who is clean and unclean. For anti-Semitism, it had to do with clean or unclean blood, whereas with Christianity,

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<sup>84</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. William Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Inc.), 188 (251).

<sup>83</sup> Jacob Golomb, ed, *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, "Nietzsche and the Jews: The structure of an ambivalence," by Yirmiyahu Yovel (New York: Routledge, 1997), 124, 125, 172.

<sup>84</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956) 170-171 (1:10).

baptism determines who is clean and unclean. Typically, those who make these distinctions see their group as clean or good and the other as unclean or evil. This was clearly the philosophy behind the Nazi ideas on blood, which will be shown presently.

It is important to distinguish between each of Nietzsche's three divisions of Judaism: biblical, priestly, and modern. We will examine what each of these divisions are in order to better understand Nietzsche's stance on Judaism, and how the Nazis in all probability misused his ideas.

Yirmiyahu Yovel, author of various articles pertaining to Nietzsche and the Jews, explains these categories by relying on Nietzsche's works. Nietzsche spoke favorably of biblical and modern Judaism, but was a harsh critic of priestly Judaism. With regards to biblical Judaism, Yovel wrote the following of Nietzsche's work, "... [he] admires their attitude to life and religion because it was vital, natural, this-worldly and was built on self-affirmation rather than self-recrimination."<sup>85</sup> Yovel believes that Nietzsche's critique of priestly Judaism is actually a direct criticism of Christianity.<sup>86</sup> According to Yovel "Nietzsche thus attributes to Jewish priests a *direct* Christian content, and often describes them as Christian *from the start*."<sup>87</sup> Yovel also lists slave morality and ideas of resentment as two of the main critiques of Christianity or priestly Judaism.<sup>88</sup>

In no way should Nietzsche's critique of priestly Judaism be transferred to modern Judaism, for Nietzsche praises the modern Jews for rejecting Christianity and for being a strong race even under difficult circumstances.<sup>89</sup> In *Beyond Good and Evil*

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 124.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 124-125.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 128.

Nietzsche says, "The Jews, however, are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe; they know how to prevail even under the worst conditions (even better than under favorable conditions), by means of virtues that today one would like to mark as vices."<sup>90</sup>

The connection of Christianity to anti-Semitism is founded on the characteristics of the slave morality, more specifically on resentment. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche criticizes anti-Semites for being the slave rather than the master.<sup>91</sup> Again, Nietzsche blames the priestly Jews for creating what he terms "slave morality," which resulted in the formation of Christianity and was also part of the corruption of the philosophy behind anti-Semitism.<sup>92</sup>

According to Jacob Golomb, a current philosophy professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the philosophical editor of the Hebrew University Magnes Press, he has written and edited books about Nietzsche, and he notes that an anti-Semite typically expressed their self identity through violence and cruelty to the other.<sup>93</sup> We have seen the truth of this through the horrors of the Holocaust. Nietzsche, who is often identified with the Nazis, clearly does not agree with the Nazis' slave morality. The Nazis fill many of the criteria of having the mindset of those who are under the spell of slave morality. They definitely set themselves apart, as the pure Aryans, and continued to say "no" to those outside, such as the Slavs, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Belorussians, the Gypsies,

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<sup>90</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 187 (251).

<sup>91</sup> Golomb, ed. *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, "Nietzsche and the Marginal Jews," by Jacob Golomb, 172.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 124, 172.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 172.



the Russians, and the Jews. Their reaction to the 'other' was violent and cruel. Nietzsche teaches that fear is what drives one to hatred.<sup>94</sup>

Fear was one of the methods that the Nazi leaders utilized. The Nazi leaders used various ideas to cause the Germany people to be afraid of the 'other.' The Nazis convinced the German people that they were not safe from the Jews. The Jews were going to take all of their jobs, they were going to contaminate their Aryan blood, they were planning to take over the world, etc. Germany during the time that Hitler took over was in political and social disarray, and Hitler preached unity and security for the German people. He preached that the Jews were the cause of all of Germany's downfalls and could not be allowed to remain a threat. Race and nationalism were the two key ideas that were used by the National Socialist party to create fear in the minds of the German people. Nietzsche, however, as will be discussed below, would not have supported the Nazis ideas of race and/or nationalism.<sup>95</sup>

### Breeding a Super Race

The idea of breeding to create the strongest race is yet another Nietzschean idea that did not fit with Nazi propaganda. Although both were in agreement about the need for a stronger race, the designs of how and who should go about it were conflicting. Hitler advocated that Germans were the superior race and needed to stop contaminating themselves with the Jews; otherwise the Aryans would cease to exist. Nietzsche, on the other hand, thought there was a need for crossbreeding with the Jews to create the "Good

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<sup>94</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 342 (379).

<sup>95</sup> "Holocaust and Theology," class notes, Spring 2004.

European.” The “Good European” is one, who has overcome nationalism;<sup>96</sup> this is accomplished through interracial breeding.<sup>97</sup>

By implementing the Nuremburg laws on September 15, 1935, the majority of the German people obviously accepted the idea of the pure-blood Aryan race. The Nuremburg laws were a set of guidelines to determine who was Jewish and who was of Aryan decent. According to Peter Haas, who wrote *Morality after Auschwitz*, defining who was Jewish ended up being more difficult than was originally thought. This was when the term “Mischling” was born to depict those who were partially Jewish and partially German. You were a second degree Mischling if one of your four grandparents were Jewish or if one of your parents converted to Judaism. You were a first degree Mischling if two of your grandparents were Jewish. And to prove that you were of pure Aryan decent you had to provide seven baptismal certificates, all four grandparents, and both parents, as well as your own. Baptismal certificates were used because the government did not keep birth records at this time. If one could not provide the proper papers the Nazis would assume you were a Jew. This is how the Nazis started to register all the Jews in Germany.<sup>98</sup> One of the motivations for doing so was that the good German people did not want to be contaminated with *Artfremdes Blut*, which means alien blood.<sup>99</sup> The Nazis preached that these people had infected alien blood that must not be mixed with the pure Aryan blood of Germans. *Artfremdes Blut*, led to the creation of

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<sup>96</sup> Nietzsche, *Human*, 175 (1:475)

<sup>97</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 20.

<sup>98</sup> Peter Haas, *Morality after Auschwitz: The Radical Challenge of the Nazi Ethic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 61-71.

<sup>99</sup> Bohdan Wytwycky, *The Other Holocaust: Many Circles of Hell* (Washington D.C.: The Novak Report on the New Ethnicity, 1980), 30.

policies that rounded up these unclean people so as to not contaminate the Aryans, these policies led to mass genocide of millions of innocent people.<sup>100</sup>

The idea of breeding presented in a work that was edited and published after Nietzsche's death, *The Will to Power* could easily be used in Nazi propaganda. Nietzsche supposedly writes in *The Will to Power*,

Breeding, as I understand it, is a means of storing up tremendous forces of mankind so that the generations can build upon the work of their forefathers... Mankind is an abstraction: the goal of breeding, even in the case of a single individual, can only be the *stronger* man (—the man without breeding is weak, extravagant, unstable—).<sup>101</sup>

This quotation about breeding coupled with the following quotation could easily be used to show that the great *German* philosopher, Nietzsche, supported the Nazi idea of the pure Aryan race. "...we Germans desire something from ourselves that has not yet been desired from us —we desire something more!"<sup>102</sup> But these words do not fit with Nietzsche's teachings presented in the published works, which he had editorial control. The phrase stated above, "so that the generations can build upon the work of their forefathers" implies that to become a strong race all nations should only breed internally—French with French, Italian with Italian, German with German, etc... But as we know Nietzsche did not desire each nation to breed within itself, as the Nazis sought to do, but he believed in crossbreeding, including the Jews, to create the "good European."<sup>103</sup> Nietzsche thought that the Jews were the highest and strongest race and would improve the European people. Hubert Cancik, author of "Mongols, Semites, and the Pure-Bred Greeks," says,

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 215 (398).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 68 (108).

<sup>103</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 20.

The analysis of the Greek model makes easier an understanding of Nietzsche's views on the place of Jews in the racial history of Europe. Just as "pure-bred Greeks" were the high point of a long development in the process of which foreign elements had been "digested", so would the Jews have to be "imbibed" in Europe—and especially in Germany—by a gradual, intelligent, careful crossing that would serve to "breed in" good characteristics. In this manner, a new, pure European race and culture would come into being.<sup>104</sup>

Here we see yet again that what is presented in *The Will to Power* promotes something quite different than what Nietzsche himself wrote, edited, and published.

There is a passage of Nietzsche's that is quite easy to Nazify in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche writes, "That the Jews, if they wanted it—or if they were forced into it, which seems to be what the anti-Semites want—*could* even now have preponderance, indeed quite literally mastery over Europe, that is certain..."<sup>105</sup> If one were to stop here, it would sound very much like the fear mongering that the Nazis propagated; creating fear and leading to hatred. But the rest of the passage paints a picture of a peaceful, not dominant people. Nietzsche goes on to say, "...that they are *not* working and planning for that is equally certain."<sup>106</sup> Here it appears that the Jews are a very strong and prominent race in Nietzsche's eyes. But he also fears their expulsion, which would be a great loss for Europe.<sup>107</sup>

The third point on which Nietzsche differs from the Nazis is in the importance of 'blood' or race. As shown above, the Nazis used blood to determine the identity of the self as well as to identify the other. Nietzsche writes against the use of blood or good race as a foundation for belief; in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes, "Characters

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<sup>104</sup> Golomb, ed, *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, "Mongols, Semites and the Pure-Bred Greeks: Nietzsche's handling of the racial doctrines of his time," by Hubert Cancik, 68.

<sup>105</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 188 (251).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 142.

of blood did they write on the way they went, and their folly taught that truth is proved by blood. But blood is the very worst witness to truth; blood tainteth the purest teaching, and turneth it into delusion and hatred of heart.”<sup>108</sup> The Nazis, as pointed out above, used the idea of blood to create hatred, exactly what Nietzsche warns against in *Zarathustra*. Therefore, *Zarathustra* helps to show that Nietzsche should not be placed as the instigator of the Nazi propagation of breeding, including *Artfremdes Blut*.<sup>109</sup> Nietzsche’s warning here proves that he would not have supported the Nazis use of blood to create fear.

### Nationalism

Despite the fact that Nietzsche is anything but a German nationalist, one can show, by using Elisabeth’s corrupted text of *The Will to Power*, that Nietzsche seems to be not only a German nationalist, but also an advocate for war, to unify Europe. First, Nietzsche allegedly says that Napoleon was great, “...by awakening again the man, the soldier, and the great fight for power—conceiving Europe as a political unit...”<sup>110</sup> Then just as Hitler did, Nietzsche goes on to call the German people to be something, “So far, the Germans are nothing, but they will become something; thus they have no culture yet—thus they cannot have any culture yet...They will become something.”<sup>111</sup> “German culture of this century arouses mistrust...The Austrians have remained German only by virtue of their music.”<sup>112</sup> This is the type of manipulation that Elisabeth and the Nazis performed on Nietzsche’s works to make his words “say” what they wanted them to.

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<sup>108</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Modern Library), 99 (2:26).

<sup>109</sup> Wytwycky, 30.

<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 66 (104).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

Once again I will show that through inspection of the works over which Nietzsche had control, he was not what the Nazis depicted him as, which was in this case an advocate for war and German nationalism.

Nietzsche does not lash into any other group of people as he does to the Germans. Also, what Nietzsche has to say about the state does not follow Nazi ideals. Yet some say he is the philosophical founder of the Nazi party! Regarding the German people, he wrote in *The Twilight of Idols*, "They are *my* enemies. I despise in them every kind of filthiness of ideas and values... For almost one thousand years they have tangled and confused everything they have laid their hands on."<sup>113</sup> Nietzsche's negative view of the state becomes quite evident in *Zarathustra*. He says,

A state, is called the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly lieth it also; and this lie creepeth from its mouth: "I, the state, am the people."  
...every people speaketh its language of good and evil...  
But the state lieth in all languages of good and evil; and whatever it saith it lieth; and whatever it hath it hath stolen.  
The state, I call it, where all poison-drinkers, the good and the bad: the state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad: the state, where the slow suicide of all—is called "life."  
There, where the state ceaseth—there only commenceth the man who is not superfluous: there commenceth the song of the necessary ones, the single and irreplaceable melody.<sup>114</sup>

Here we see a link to the propaganda that Hitler preached. In various rallies he would use the state in relation to the people. The video *Triumph des Willen*<sup>115</sup> shows actual footage

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<sup>113</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols*, 229 quoted in Nicolas, *From Nietzsche Down to Hitler*, 109.

<sup>114</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 49-52 (1:11).

<sup>115</sup> Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willen (Triumph of the Will)* (Los Angeles: Embassy Home Entertainment, 1986). *Triumph of the Will* was a propaganda video that started circulating in 1934; it also was awarded first place at The Paris International Exhibition Videocassette release of the 1934 motion picture. This video was used to promote nationalism in Germany. It showed that Hitler was taking down the barriers. That all men were equal, they would work for the good of the nation. There would be

of a rally for Hitler's Youth, the organization that trained the young to believe Nazi ideas. At this rally Hitler said, "We want one nation. For it to be peace-loving, courageous, obedient, hard not soft..." Hitler goes on, "The state does not order us! We order the state, our German Nation."<sup>116</sup> At a gathering of labor service men, Hitler spoke these words, "One people, One Führer, One country!"<sup>117</sup> Through examination of Zarathustra we find that this idea of the state and the people being one disgusted Nietzsche. Yet, we are to believe that a man who did not support Germany or nationalistic ideas was the cause of so much bloodshed.

## War

According to *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche supposedly advocates six points which are to "remedy modernity;" two of the six deal with the importance of the military. They are: "1) universal military service with real wars in which the time for joking is past; and 2) military severity in the demand for an handling of ones "obligations" (one does not praise any more—)."<sup>118</sup>

This view allegedly presented by Nietzsche in *The Will to Power*, fits very well with Hitler's view of war. But the examination of Nietzsche's and Hitler's views about the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, will bring to light the fact that Nietzsche and Hitler do not agree on the topic of war. Hitler writes in *Mein Kampf* that the Franco-Prussian war was

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much needed stability with the great Führer.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 78 (126).

“a magnificent triumphant march.”<sup>119</sup> He continues with the following, “What the German people owe to the army can be summed up in one word: everything.”<sup>120</sup> Upon looking at Nietzsche’s letters we find that Nietzsche was distressed about the happenings of the Franco-Prussian war. To Erwin Rohde he writes on July 19, 1870: “A terrifying thunderclap here: the Franco-Prussian war has been declared, and our whole sleazy culture is falling headlong into the arms of the most appalling demon. The things we’re about to witness!”<sup>121</sup> And in November of 1870 Nietzsche writes to Baron von Gersdorff, “When I heard of the burning of Paris, I was completely overcome for several days; I was in tears.”<sup>122</sup> Both men have spoken and what they have said is not the same. Nietzsche and Hitler clash on most of the ideas that they each present on war and violence as I will discuss further below.

The purpose behind Hitler’s war was to gain power by expanding control of territory. He used fear to satisfy his desire for power. He caused the German people to fear their neighbors. Their neighbors he taught were trying to belittle and destroy the great Aryan race, as was made clear by all the restrictions placed on Germany after World War I. Nietzsche is specifically critical of aligning oneself against one’s neighbors as an excuse for war, or so he writes in *Human*:

This is how all states now confront one another: they presuppose an evil disposition in their neighbor and a benevolent disposition in themselves. This presupposition, however, is a piece of *inhumanity* as bad as, if not worse than, a war would be; indeed, fundamentally it already constitutes an invitation to and cause of wars, because, as aforesaid, it imputes immorality to one’s neighbor and thereby seems to provoke hostility and hostile acts on his part. The doctrine of the army as a means of self-defense must be renounced just as completely as the

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<sup>119</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 23, quoted Nicolas, 137.

<sup>120</sup> Hitler, 278 quoted in Nicolas, 137-138.

<sup>121</sup> *Nietzsche: A Self Portrait*, 11.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Nicolas, 136.



thirst for conquest. And perhaps there will come a great day on which a nation distinguished for wars and victories and for the highest development of military discipline and thinking, and accustomed to making the heaviest sacrifices on behalf of these things, will cry of its own free will: '*we shall shatter the sword*'—and demolish its entire military machine down to its last foundations.<sup>123</sup>

Four important elements of the Nazi party were anti-Semitism, racism, nationalism, and war. Upon comparing *The Will to Power*, which was controlled by his sister, to the published works and personal letters, which were in Nietzsche's control, we have found discrepancies. Based on what Nietzsche had control over we have found what Nietzsche actually thought about the topics in question versus what the Nazi propaganda found in *The Will to Power*, would have one believe. Nietzsche did not agree with any one of these four important elements of Nazism; he fought against them all.

Nietzsche clearly was not an anti-Semite. As stated above, he praises the biblical and modern Jews. He also ties anti-Semitism and Christianity together, both of which he writes in *Beyond*, as having:

[N]ationalistic nerve fever and political ambitions. Examples among the Germans today include now the anti-French stupidity, now the anti-Jewish, now the anti-Polish, now the Christian-romantic, now the Wagnerian, now the Teutonic, now the Prussian and whatever other names these little mystifications of the German spirit and conscience may have.<sup>124</sup>

Considering racism, Nietzsche was in complete opposition to the Nazi ideals. Nietzsche thought the Jews were of a far superior race, particularly in comparison with the inferior German race. This is evident by Nietzsche's call for the development of the "Good European." The idea of the Good European was to be accomplished through cross-breeding in the good characteristics of each race; this was of course to include the

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<sup>123</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, intro. Richard Schacht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 380 (WS:284).

<sup>124</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond*, 186-187 (8:251).

superior Jews.<sup>125</sup> Nietzsche continually not only devalues the German race, he also disputes nationalism. As quoted above he states in *Zarathustra*, “The state, I call it, where all poison-drinkers, the good and the bad: the state, where all lose themselves, the good and the bad: the state, where the slow suicide of all—is called ‘life.’”<sup>126</sup> And finally regarding war, more often than not Nietzsche did not support war, and he certainly did not show support for the type of war that Hitler perpetrated on the world in World War II.

Based on the comparison of *The Will to Power* to the earlier published works under Nietzsche’s control, we have discovered two important issues regarding Nietzsche. One is that there are many discrepancies in *The Will to Power*, which means that it is probable that this work was distorted. It is widely believed that Elisabeth was behind the difference between the ideas presented in *The Will to Power* and what Nietzsche had control over, the published works. More importantly, we have discovered that based on an examination of these four elements in Nazism and in Nietzsche: anti-Semitism, racism, German nationalism, and war, that Nietzsche could not be the Nazi that he is trumped up to be. Since his works indicate that he did not agree with any of these key elements. Therefore, it is a fair deduction to say that he would not have supported the Nazis or their use his name.

For this reason there are many questions to ask, which will be discussed further in the following chapter. Why has Nietzsche continually been blamed as one of the causes of the Holocaust? Who used his works to promote Nazi-Nietzsche ideals? Why would the Nazis turn to Nietzsche for support, if he did not support their causes?

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<sup>125</sup> Santanello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 20.

<sup>126</sup> Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 50-51 (1:11).

## CHAPTER 3

WHAT NAZIS WANTED TO USE NIETZSCHE? HOW DID THEY USE  
NIETZSCHE? AND WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO?

Over thirty years after Nietzsche's death, in the 1930s-40s, he became quite a popular philosopher. I have already shown that Nietzsche's philosophy would not have supported Nazism, and yet there were many Nazi intellectuals that were in favor of using Nietzsche, and they were what made the abuse of Nietzsche a reality. Those who were most responsible were the intellectuals and political leaders who were connected with the Nazi party. The intellectuals included: Alfred Baeumler, Julien M. Benda, Richard Oehler, and Heinrich Römer<sup>127</sup>. These intellectuals all contributed to the misunderstanding of Nietzsche and his philosophy. They all tried to show that Nietzsche was the foundation for Nazism. Some of the political leaders involved with promoting Nietzsche were: Alfred Rosenberg and Adolph Hitler, but the one who perpetrated the most damage was Joseph Goebbels.<sup>128</sup> Goebbels was responsible for the use of Nietzsche by most of those listed above, particularly the intellectuals and Hitler. This was due to the positions he held in the Third Reich. As Minister of Propaganda and President of the Chamber, he controlled all propaganda disseminated to the German public.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Baeumler was chair of the political philosophy department in Berlin during Hitler's reign and he was a supposed Nietzsche expert. Benda was a famous author and critic in the 1920s and 1930s. Oehler was among the early abusers and wrote *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft*, which was published in 1935. Römer was a Nazi who wrote an article in 1940 that connected Nietzsche with the Nazis.

<sup>128</sup> Rosenberg, Hitler, and Goebbels were all Nazis who contributed to the misuse of Nietzsche in one way or another.

<sup>129</sup> Sidney Bolkosky, "The Use of Nietzsche in Nazi Propaganda: It's legitimacy and validity" (MA thesis, Wayne State University, 1966), 40.

## Abuse by the Intellectuals

In the early 1930s, Alfred Baeumler was asked to come to Berlin to be the chair of political philosophy.<sup>130</sup> Baeumler, a Nazi, was considered to be a Nietzsche expert.<sup>131</sup> The Nazis used Baeumler to show that there was intellectual respectability to the argument that Nietzsche was the founder of National Socialism. According to Sidney Bolkosky, who has worked on this same topic, Baeumler was, “An alleged Nietzsche expert, he was called upon to reconcile the ideological gaps between Nietzsche’s philosophy and that of National Socialism.”<sup>132</sup> Baeumler tried to close this gap by presenting many radical ideas that connect Nietzsche to Nazism. Many of these ideas were spread when Baeumler’s book, *Nietzsche, the Philosopher and Politician*, was published in 1931.<sup>133</sup>

One of these radical opinions took Nietzsche’s anti-Semitism and explained it in a way that made him seem even more of a Nazi fanatic. Another contemporary voice that mentions Baeumler is Steven E. Aschheim, he does so in his book, *Culture and Catastrophe*. Aschheim’s point is that Baeumler was trying to extend Nazism through Nietzsche by stating that blood was important to Nietzsche. We find, according to Aschheim, that Baeumler taught the following: “[Nietzsche] opposed its [anti-Semitism] traditional nineteenth-century varieties and its Christian versions because he stood for a newer and more radical form, one whose anti-Christian and biological sources pushed it

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<sup>130</sup> Bolkosky, 14.

<sup>131</sup> Kaufmann, "Introduction" to *The Will to Power*, by Nietzsche, xiii.

<sup>132</sup> Bolkosky, 43.

<sup>133</sup> Kaufmann, "Introduction" to *The Will to Power*, by Nietzsche, xiii.

far beyond the limited confessional, economic and social domain.”<sup>134</sup> Baeumler was so intent on re-presenting Nietzsche that he tried to explain the meaning of the passages where Nietzsche speaks positively of the Jews. He taught that when Nietzsche speaks positively of the Jews he is just being ironic and is trying to anger the Germans so that the German people would listen to him.<sup>135</sup> Considering who Baeumler was preaching these things to, it is no surprise how Nietzsche was confused with the Nazi party, and how his ideas were so grossly misinterpreted.

However, Baeumler did not stop there. He was the editor of the first edition of the one volume text of *The Will to Power*. And with his postscript he helped plant the seed that made this book influential as opposed to the other published works. He wrote that *The Will to Power* brings together all of Nietzsche’s thoughts into a cohesive unit.<sup>136</sup> The emphasis was on the fact that Nietzsche’s published writings were just a front, and the truth of Nietzsche’s thoughts were revealed in the unpublished materials.<sup>137</sup>

Baeumler also tried to undermine Nietzsche’s negative view of the state. Baeumler begins by explaining that it is not all states that Nietzsche despises. Nietzsche, he argues, did not approve of the Second Reich because, “it was based on the defeat of the German people by Roman and Christian elements...”<sup>138</sup> What appeared then in Nietzsche’s work to be anti-German was actually Nietzsche’s, “teutonic warrior pride and

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<sup>134</sup> Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Kaufmann, "Introduction" to *The Will to Power*, by Nietzsche, xiii.

<sup>137</sup> Bolkosky, 16.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Bolkosky, 14-15.

defiance.”<sup>139</sup> Baeumler ultimately concludes that had Nietzsche been alive he would have supported and affirmed the Third Reich because it was “...governed by a head ineffable German, by a Führer.”<sup>140</sup>

Another scholar and author, Richard Oehler, published a book about Nietzsche in 1935 titled, *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft*. Oehler also helps to generate the idea that Nietzsche would have most certainly approved of a government led by a Führer. Another contemporary argument comes from Bolkosky, he says that Oehler focuses on Nietzsche’s definition of true leadership. “Nietzsche is looking for a Führer,” writes Bolkosky, “a man possessing a ‘hitherto nonexistent strength, greatness, height...who combines the instinctive and theoretical.’”<sup>141</sup> Oehler goes on to say that once this great leader is found Nietzsche demands that the masses follow the Führer.<sup>142</sup> Oehler justifies his argument by reinterpreting the Nietzsche passages that differ from the Nazi view. He argues that Nietzsche’s life is split into three periods, and the second period is where the anti-Nazi sentiments come from. The reason that Oehler gives for Nietzsche’s negativity towards Nazi ideas is because Nietzsche’s break from Wagner caused some resentment to the ideas that Wagner endorsed. Therefore one should focus on what’s truly important to Nietzsche, the strong leadership of a Führer.<sup>143</sup>

There were also the few who stood up for Nietzsche against these intellectuals, which misrepresented his works to complement the current power, the Nazis. A French scholar, Marius Paul Nicolas, published a book, *From Nietzsche Down to Hitler*, in 1938.

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<sup>139</sup> Alfred Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1931), 12, quoted in Bolkosky, 45.

<sup>140</sup> Bolkosky, 15.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

Nicolas is fighting a particular intellectual, Julien M. Benda. Nicolas writes that Benda “paves the way for those who now say: ‘Nietzsche and Hitler’.”<sup>144</sup> Benda is one who played with Nietzsche’s words to express what he wanted Nietzsche to say. Benda’s result was the unification of Nietzsche and Hitler. One thing to keep in mind when examining Benda’s arguments, warns Nicolas, is that he did not care what a scholar was trying to say, but merely critiquing the influence of the scholar.<sup>145</sup> Benda’s credibility is questionable because he presumably did not care what Nietzsche was actually trying to teach, but only what the interpretation of Nietzsche’s influence was. Therefore, what the Nazis presented as Nietzsche philosophy, whether or not it was his actual philosophy, was a part of Nietzsche’s influence. Therefore according to Benda, Nietzsche is responsible for how the Nazis used him and the influence of their “Nietzsche” quotes.

The offenses that Nicolas charges Benda with revolve around Benda’s misrepresentation of Nietzsche, which intended to produce a correlation between Nietzsche and Nazism. Some of the methods Nicolas accused Benda of using are as follows: connecting Nietzsche’s name with Sorel,<sup>146</sup> playing with words to present a Nazi-Nietzsche,<sup>147</sup> and ultimately arranging Nietzsche to be connected to Hitler.<sup>148</sup> These will be examined below to show that those who supported a Nazi-Nietzsche had to manipulate Nietzsche’s ideas presented in his works.

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<sup>144</sup> Nicolas, 9.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 32-35, 58-59.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 9.

Benda makes the connection between George Sorel<sup>149</sup> and Nietzsche based on ideas of power, or so says Nicolas. Nietzsche's idea of the will to power is manipulated to relate to Sorel's idea of political power. In reality Nietzsche's idea of will to power is actually about individual growth, and overcoming oneself. And the core of Sorel's power is on the "priority of political economy."<sup>150</sup> Therefore, Hitler's ideas of power were very similar to Sorel's in that they were characteristically rooted in political economy. Hitler believed that power was measured by the quantity of territory one had. Therefore if one concludes that Nietzsche's and Sorel's ideas of power are the same it is quite easy to show that Nietzsche's ideas of power would support Hitler's views on power.<sup>151</sup> And connecting Nietzsche to the Führer through similar views of power is a gross deviation from what Nietzsche actual thought about power as will be discussed below.

Another notable scholar, Gustav Buscher, who was a contemporary of Benda's had an article published in a 1936 issue of the *Contemporary Review* titled, "Nietzsche: A Prophet of Dictatorship." He tried to show that Hitler was implementing Nietzsche's philosophy. "Nietzsche is Hitler's spiritual grandsire," Buscher said, "The similarity, both spiritual and physical, between them is too great."<sup>152</sup>

Heinrich Römer also contributed to the Nazification of Nietzsche when he wrote the article titled "*Nietzsche und das Rasseproblem*,"<sup>153</sup> which was published in 1940. In this article he wrote, "Nazism was indebted to Nietzsche's pivotal insight that Israel had de-naturalized natural values. The clear implication was that National Socialism had to

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<sup>149</sup> George Sorel was born in 1847 and died in 1922. He was a philosopher and author who was extremely influential to Mussolini.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Bolkosky, 20.

<sup>153</sup> Translated as Nietzsche and the Race Problem.



be regarded as the countermovement leading to a renaturalization.”<sup>154</sup> This is yet another example of defining the self and the other as opposites.

### The Political Agenda

Alfred Rosenberg was a Nazis who used Nietzsche’s work to support his political agenda. Rosenberg helped circulate a picture taken in the Nietzsche Archive; the picture was of Hitler staring at Nietzsche’s bust.<sup>155</sup> (See Figure 2). According to Thomas, who wrote *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society: 1890-1918*, Rosenberg also wrote a rave review of Nietzsche in his *Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.<sup>156</sup> Vermeil, who wrote various articles on Germany, states that, “Hitler and Rosenberg, by their horror of every abstract international idea, by their repugnance for every principle of universal morality capable of bring together the nations of the old continent, are and remain Nietzsche’s disciples.”<sup>157</sup> Rosenberg and the intellectuals stated above contributed to the misrepresentation of Nietzsche as a Nazi, but more importantly they laid the groundwork for Hitler’s use of Nietzsche.

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<sup>154</sup> Golomb, ed. *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, “Nietzsche’s Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust,” by Steven E. Aschheim, 9.

<sup>155</sup> R. Hinton Thomas, *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918* (New Hampshire: Manchester University Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> *Nietzsche et la Revolution Allemande* (Nouvelles Litteraires, 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1935), quoted in Nicolas, 123.



Figure 2. Hitler looking at a bust of Nietzsche, 1934.  
Courtesy of the Goethe-Schiller Archive, Weimar.  
Found in *The Nietzsche Legacy In Germany, 1890-1990*, by  
Steven E. Achheim, following page 200.

Hitler showed his support for Nietzsche by endorsing the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar. He made several appearances in 1934 to 1944. His first appearance was to celebrate Nietzsche's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 1934 (See Figure 3), and in 1935 to attend Elisabeth's funeral. He also attended the opening of a new building in 1937, and finally, in 1944 he showed support for the work that was being done to preserve the Nietzsche Archive.<sup>158</sup>



Figure 3. Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche greets Hitler at the Nietzsche archive, 1934  
 Courtesy of the Goethe-Schiller Archive, Weimar.  
 Found in *The Nietzsche Legacy In Germany: 1890-1990*, by  
 Steven E. Achheim, following page 200.

<sup>158</sup> Bolkosky, 2.

One movement that caused confusion with connecting Nietzsche with Hitler is brought into view by Nicolas in his book, *From Nietzsche Down to Hitler*. This movement was to show that the two had similar ideas on several topics including: power, greatness/weakness, view of the church, and the German race. Now we will examine Nicolas' defeat of each of these topics. He will show that Nietzsche's and Hitler's views on these topics are in opposition.

What Nietzsche means by powerful in the view that Nicolas presents upon relying on *Beyond*, is briefly summed up in the following statements, "[those] who would put an end to the folly of 'the greatest number,'<sup>159</sup> would but an end to the tyranny of the masses as they would the tyranny of dictators."<sup>160</sup> Drawing on *Zarathustra*, Nicolas argues that, "Nietzsche dreams of a powerful nobility, but one whose 'power' might walk in rags and go unarmed."<sup>161</sup> The picture painted here by Nicolas of Nietzsche's ideas on power do not describe who Hitler was. Hitler was a dictator, number one and number two, he believed in being armed, as was proven by his actions when he was in power. Another area of power that the two disagree on is the way that greatness and weakness are understood. Hitler believed that political power was at the heart of greatness which Nietzsche sees as weakness.<sup>162</sup> Nietzsche concentrates on the desire of knowledge as a point of greatness, as is understood in his definition of will to power.

Both Nietzsche and Hitler speak negatively of The Church and both rely on their views of the state to justify their position. But they each use the state to make opposing points. Hitler scorns the Church because it focuses on religion more than on the state.

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<sup>159</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond*, 129, quoted in Nicolas, 56.

<sup>160</sup> Nicolas, 56.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 49.

Hitler writes in *Mein Kampf*, “It seemed to me that the Church was not, at heart, with the German people... this Church no longer favors national interests.”<sup>163</sup> Nietzsche argues the opposite. He ridicules the Church for being too involved with the State.<sup>164</sup>

Regarding Hitler’s and Nietzsche’s varying opinions of the German race, I will direct you to a quote from *Mein Kampf* and the section of “Breeding a Super Race” in chapter 2 above. Hitler wrote, “We are the superior species with whom the goodness of God has favored this earth.”<sup>165</sup>

The man responsible for placing Baeumler, the chair of the political philosophy department in Berlin, at such an influential position and promoting the Nazi-Nietzsche was Joseph Goebbels. Goebbels was appointed Minister of Propaganda in 1927 and President of the Chamber in 1933.<sup>166</sup> He describes the Propaganda Department as follows: “[It] is the ideological education of the German people... to instill the Nazi outlook into the whole German people... In short, it is the task of the Party of Propaganda Department to instruct every German how he should think and feel.”<sup>167</sup> The law that created the Reich Culture Chamber, of which Goebbels was President, describes the purpose of the Chamber:

In order to pursue a policy of German culture it is necessary to gather together the creative artists in all spheres into a unified organization under the leadership of the Reich. The Reich must not only determine the lines of progress, mental and spiritual, but also lead and organize the professions.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Hitler, 113, quoted in Nicolas, 73.

<sup>164</sup> Nicolas, 73.

<sup>165</sup> Hitler, 396, quoted in Nicolas, 107.

<sup>166</sup> Bolkosky, 38, 40.

<sup>167</sup> Derrick Singleton and Arthur Weidenfeld, *The Goebbels' Experiment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 32, quoted in Bolkosky, 38.

<sup>168</sup> William Ebenstein, *The Nazi State* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc.), 126, quoted in Bolkosky, 39.

In short, Goebbles had control over all information that was given to the German people; including art, music, literature, publishing companies, film, newspapers, etc...<sup>169</sup>

It is at this point in history that we see that Goebbles controlled who was “correctly” interpreting Nietzsche. Above we have seen that Goebbles placed Baeumler’s view of Nietzsche in the lime light; as he was the chair of the political philosophy department in Berlin. As Baeumler was spreading his lies about Nietzsche to the brilliant minds of the young, Goebbles ensured that those who presented a different view of Nietzsche were soon quieted. This is apparent in the case of Theodor Lessing as presented by Golomb in “Nietzsche and the Marginal Jew.” Lessing was born in 1872, and had his first book about Nietzsche and Wagner published in 1908. He continued to write about Nietzsche until his death in 1933. We will see that Lessing promoted a pro-Jewish Nietzsche and that Goebbles would not allow this view of Nietzsche to be heard. Lessing uses Nietzsche to call upon the Jews to “...reactivate their mental resources in courageous acts of self-overcoming with respect to whatever threatens this identity and authentic selfhood”<sup>170</sup> In November 1933, the Nazis showed how they would deal with opposing views; Lessing was killed by a Nazi agent.<sup>171</sup> By 1935, Goebbles, under the Reich Chamber of Literature, issued a law that controlled what literature was allowed in Nazi Germany. Goebbles was, therefore, ultimately responsible for allowing Nietzsche’s works to remain in Germany. That is he allowed Nietzsche’s works to remain under his watchful eye. This can only mean that Nietzsche’s thoughts had been Nazified beyond recognition. And so Nietzsche’s works were presented and delivered and received as

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<sup>169</sup> Bolkosky, 39-40.

<sup>170</sup> Golomb, ed., by Golomb, 171.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 171-172

Nazi by the public. This was the start of the belief that the unpublished works were Nietzsche's true beliefs.<sup>172</sup>

#### Why Nietzsche was used

Now we come to the question of why the Nazis would appropriate the work of a man who was undoubtedly opposed to Nazi ideas. Yovel presents a complex theory as to why Nietzsche was used by the Nazis, including, "his special mode of writing; the non-ordinary psychology required by his position; the 'right-wing' origin of his sensibilities; and his political impotence."<sup>173</sup> With regard to Nietzsche's writing, Yovel argues that Nietzsche's use of irony is often misunderstood. Readers who take the use of irony at face value often adopt mistakenly, the opposite point that Nietzsche was trying to make. For example Nietzsche writes in *Beyond*,

That Germany has amply *enough* Jews, that the German stomach, (the German blood has trouble for a long time) digesting even the quantum of "Jew"—as the Italians, French, and English have done, having a stronger digestive system—that is the clear testimony and language of a general instinct to which one must listen, in accordance with which one must act. "Admit no more new Jews! And especially close the doors to the east (also to Austria)!"<sup>174</sup>

This passage is taken from a section where Nietzsche is completely disgusted with how the Jews are being treated. He goes on to say after this that Germany needs to realize the strength of the Jews, because they are what should be included in making the "Good European."<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Bolkosky, 40-47.

<sup>173</sup> Golomb, ed, by Yovel, 131.

<sup>174</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond*, 187 (251).

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 186-188 (251).

Nietzsche's philosophy is difficult to hold onto because it requires one to, "hold on *at the same time* to positions which are usually considered psychologically incompatible."<sup>176</sup> This may result in one coming to the wrong conclusion and consequently misrepresenting Nietzsche's views. Because of the ironical approach Nietzsche is used by both right-wing and left-wing groups to promote their views, though Nietzsche, in fact supports neither side. These groups take what they want from Nietzsche, and like the Nazis they try to dismiss his conflicting views as unimportant or as not his final word on the matter. Finally, Nietzsche was open to political abuse because he did not protect himself against the possibility that his ideas, meant for the elite few, would be appropriated by the masses.<sup>177</sup>

Another theory that answers this difficult question is presented by Santaniello.

She argues that the Nazis were trying to level the playing field.

The process of manipulating Nietzsche, which began with Elisabeth and culminated with Hitler, was no "selective appropriation" or "misinterpretation"; it was based on the plain fact that they sought to silence an obnoxious foe, which they indeed did.<sup>178</sup>

She goes on to explain three reasons why Nietzsche was used as a scapegoat after the war, a situation which helped to sustain the misunderstanding that Nietzsche was a Nazi. According to Santaniello, after the war Nietzsche was feared by many because his ideas allegedly led to the heinous acts of the Holocaust. It was unclear as how to handle his anti-Jewish statements. Many feared that his ideas would once again affect themselves and their society.<sup>179</sup> Fear also played a large role in the misrepresentation of Nietzsche's

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<sup>176</sup> Golomb, ed, by Yovel, 131)

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 131-132.

<sup>178</sup> Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 52, 151.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 151-152.



thoughts. One reason that Nietzsche's reputation remains clouded to this day is because neo-Nazi groups still use his name. Typically, they do not accurately represent Nietzsche. It seems that the guilt by association, which has burdened Nietzsche since the Nazis, still applies to him and his work.

### The Current Abuse of Nietzsche

A group that calls themselves the Aryan Nations uses Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*.

This organization calls to the,

Kindred, WAKE UP, join the Aryan Nations in our fight against this evil, jewish menace... Don't delay, JOIN Today! Together we can reach the masses with the Truth of Yahweh, exposing jewry as Satan' kid's and the Children of Darkness they are! Send in your Membership Application TODAY!<sup>180</sup>

And their motto consists of the words of Adolf Hitler "Those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live." This group uses *Zarathustra* to explain the overman, and that they should fight against those who are the "Despisers of life..." The "Despisers of life" are of course the Jews. As discovered above, Nietzsche's philosophy simply does not support these negative views of the Jews. Here is an example of Nietzsche's name being soiled by the use of those who simply do not understand what his philosophy is all about.

Another group of neo-Nazis is the National Socialist Black Metal. This group is unique to the neo-Nazi movement, because they are joined together by a type of music, as well as similar beliefs. The music is laced with themes of National Socialism and anti-Judeo/Christian ideals. The music itself consists of, "a blistering sound of rasping vocals

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<sup>180</sup> *Aryan Nations*, <http://www.aryan-nations.org>

and distorted, chaotic guitars over droning percussion.”<sup>181</sup> According to an article posted on their website, written by Lunsford, Massa, and Ward, “the combination of the ‘will to power’ philosophy of Nietzsche and the ethnic nationalism that is often associated with the worship of pagan gods that first pointed some in the scene toward violent racism and anti-Semitism.”<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> *National Socialist Black Metal*, <http://www.nsbm.org>

<sup>182</sup> John Lunsford, Massa, and Ward, “Sounds of Violence,” *National Socialist Black Metal*, [http://www.nsbm.org/media/spic\\_report.html](http://www.nsbm.org/media/spic_report.html)

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Despite a stream of scholarly works that cry for Nietzsche's release from such damaging misrepresentation, his work continues to be used by current Nazi movements. Nietzsche's reputation continues to be tainted. Much of this abuse was caused because Nietzsche was misrepresented as a forerunner and defender of the Nazi movement. Although the Nazis used some of his works, upon close inspection we found that the Nazis manipulated Nietzsche's works to fit their ideas. Often times they used the corrupt text, *The Will to Power*—the result of his sister Elisabeth's ideology. We have discovered throughout this work that the many ideas presented in *The Will to Power* do not fit with the ideas that Nietzsche himself presented in the works over which he had editorial control. It is my hope that this work has contributed to the ongoing task of clearing his name as a contributor to the Nazi movement.

I have shown that Nietzsche could not have been a supporter of the Nazis. We have seen that based on Nietzsche's relationships he was not an anti-Semite. In fact we must conclude the opposite, that Nietzsche loathed those who were anti-Semitic, and broke away from people who held such beliefs.

It has also been shown through an examination of Nietzsche's texts that he did not agree with four important elements of Nazism: anti-Semitism, racism, nationalism, and war. And the works that Nietzsche had control over tell us that these four elements of Nazism disgusted Nietzsche. The Nazis as well as Elisabeth helped to fabricate this image of Nietzsche the Nazi. And we have seen that the ideology presented in *The Will*

*to Power* by the Nazis was a gross departure from what Nietzsche actually thought.

Because of the liberties taken when editing the notes to form this book, I think that the only way to get some use out of Nietzsche's notes is to take a literary approach.

Nietzsche's notes need to be re-edited. The sections which he crossed out should not be used, or if they are used should be noted as so. Then, the notes need to be literary critiqued and cross-referenced with his literary style that is present in the published works. Literarily critiquing the notes is a way to ensure that the editors are considerate of authentically presenting *Nietzsche's* ideas. Another way to present Nietzsche's notes is to re-decipher and present the notebooks as notebooks. Go through and show word for word what he wrote and what he crossed out, etc...present the pages as they exactly appear in the notebooks. These two options of representing the notebooks are a way to present the notes as what they are, notes. *The Will to Power*, has caused enough deviation from Nietzsche's actual work, and should no longer be presented as one of his works. It is time to look anew at what this great mind actually has to say.

## APPENDIX

### Nietzsche's "Published Works"

*The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)

*Untimely Meditations* (1873-76)

*Human, All-too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (1878-80)

*Daybreak* (1880)

*The Gay Science: with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs* (1882)

*Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85)

*Beyond Good and Evil* (1886)

*Toward the Genealogy of Morals* (1887)

*Twilight of Idols* (1880)

*The Antichrist* (1895)

*Ecce Homo* (1908)

*Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1895).<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Those that were published after 1888 are possibly less credible because they were in Elisabeth's hands before they were published, however they are commonly believed to have been edited by Friedrich Nietzsche and approved by him for publication before he collapsed. Therefore, they are believed to be credible by most scholars.

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