

**T.R.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES M.A. PROGRAMME**

M.A. THESIS

**A STUDY ON THE PERSPECTIVES ANALYSING
POLITICAL IMPACT OF NIETZSCHE'S
PHILOSOPHY**

**HARUN BOZOĞLU
16735005**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. AYŞEGÜL BAYKAN**

**ISTANBUL
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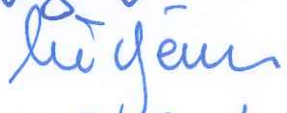

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ÖZ

NIETZSCHE'NİN POLİTİK FELSEFESİNİN ETKİLERİNİ İNCELEYEN PERSPEKTİFLER ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Harun Bozođlu

Mayıs, 2018

Yaklaşık olarak 1950'lerin sonuna kadar birçok olumsuz etiketle birlikte anılan Nietzsche, 1960'larla birlikte nispeten bu olumsuz algının aurasından sıyrılıp yeni ve pozitif bir etiketlenme sürecine dahil olmuştur. Nietzsche'ye bu pozitif etiketi kazandıranlar anglo-sakson bilim dünyasında Walter Kaufmann gibi kişilerin yoğun ve bireysel çabalarıyla mümkün hale gelse de genel olarak 20.yy. kıta felsefesinde hüküm sürmeye başlayan düşünürler vasıtasıyla gerçekleşmiştir. 1980'lerle birlikte Nietzsche artık postmodernizm diye adlandırdığımız sosyo-kültürel bir hareketin kurucu babası unvanını kazanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, dört ana sorunsalı vurgulamak istiyorum. Birincisi, Nietzsche'yi politik, apolitik ve/veya anti politik kategorilerinden hangisinde konumlandırmak mümkün? Nietzsche'nin kendini 'son antipolitik alman' olarak nitelmesini doğrudan kabul mü edeceğiz yoksa bu 'antipolitikliğin' doğasını Nietzsche'nin kendi felsefi düşüncesinden yola çıkıp anlamlandırmaya mı çalışacağız? İkincisi, günümüzde Nietzsche dediğimizde aslında kimin Nietzsche'sinden bahsediyoruz? Örneğin, Alfred Baeumler'in Nietzsche'siyle Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty ve Sarah Kofman'ın Nietzsche'si aynı kişi midir? Üçüncüsü, Nietzsche'nin politize edilip Nasyonal Sosyalizmle anılır olmasındaki temel dinamiklerin neler olduğuna değinmek gerekiyor. Nasyonal Sosyalizmle anılır olmakta sadece Nietzsche'nin kendi felsefesinin doğası mı etkiliydi yoksa felsefesindeki müphemlikle beraber dönemin farklı dinamikleri de buna yol açtı mı? Dördüncüsü, feminist epistemolojinin Nietzsche'nin mirasını nasıl taktiksel olarak kendi politik gündemleri için kullandığını inceleyeceğiz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Postmodernizm, Siyaset, Nasyonal Sosyalizm, Nietzsche, Feminizm

ABSTRACT

A STUDY ON THE PERSPECTIVES ANALYSING POLITICAL IMPACT OF NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY

Harun Bozođlu
May, 2018

Nietzsche, who had been identified with so many pejorative labels up until late 1950s, has joined a relatively new and positive labelling process by getting rid of the previous perception's negative aura. Although vigorous efforts in anglo-saxon world of science such as Walter Kaufmann's has helped Nietzsche to acquire this new positive label, in general terms it has been possible due to the thinkers who began to be influential in 20th century continental philosophy. During 1980s, Nietzsche has acquired the title of founding father of a socio-cultural movement, what we call today postmodernism. In this study, I would like to emphasise four main problematics. First, which category is appropriate to situate Nietzschean legacy: political, apolitical and/or anti-political? Shall we take Nietzsche's pronouncement that he is anti-political for granted or shall we try to understand the nature of this 'anti-political' by looking at his own works. Second, whose Nietzsche are we talking about? For instance, is Alfred Baeumler's Nietzsche same as Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty and Sarah Kofman's? Third, we should touch upon the main dynamics behind the politicization of Nietzsche and Nazis-Nietzsche identification. Is it just because of the nature of Nietzschean philosophy or are there also different contextual dynamics behind this identification along with his vague writing style? Fourth, we shall examine how feminist epistemology has tactically appropriated Nietzschean legacy for its political agenda.

Key Words: Postmodernism, Politics, National Socialism, Nietzsche, Feminism

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Istanbul; May, 2018

Harun Bozođlu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZ	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	9
1. TEXTUAL NIETZSCHE: POLITICAL, APOLITICAL OR ANTIPOLITICAL?. 9	
2. THE PREDOMINANT NIETZSCHEAN CONCEPTS WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS	17
2.1. Perspectivism	17
2.2. Aristocratism.....	19
2.3. Will to Power	22
CHAPTER 2	24
THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON NIETZSCHE.....	24
Walter Kaufmann’s Nietzsche	25
Richard Rorty’s Nietzsche	27
Michel Foucault’s Nietzsche.....	29
Sarah Kofman’s Nietzsche.....	32
Feminism’s Nietzsche	34
CHAPTER 3	37
POLITICIZATION OF NIETZSCHE AND THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF HIS LEGACY	37
The Case of National Socialism.....	37
Jewish Question: An Anti-Semitic Nietzsche?	44
CONCLUSION.....	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
CURRICULUM VITAE	55

INTRODUCTION¹

Nietzsche (1844-1900) as a political and philosophical figure has profoundly influenced not only his period but also 20th century intellectual life. While he was pejoratively associated with Nazism before and after the Second World War, toward the 1960s we see a much more positive Nietzsche figure by means of Walter Kaufmann's works in Anglo-Saxon world. When it came to 1980s, Nietzsche became one of the founding fathers of postmodern condition. In 21st century, his works are being seen as one of the most inspiring resources which have paved the way for other seminal works in philosophy, aesthetics, social theory, linguistics and social anthropology. To understand deeply this thesis' contextual basis and Nietzschean philosophical position, we shall look at Nietzsche's life, his social milieu and works.

Nietzsche was born in a small German village in 1844. He was named after the Prussian King, Friedrich August Ludwig Nietzsche, since Nietzsche's birthday coincided with the 49th birthday of the King. Nietzsche's grandfathers and uncles were Lutheran. Moreover, His paternal grandfather was a famous Protestant scholar. When Nietzsche was 5, his father, Karl Ludwig Nietzsche (1813-1849) died because of a brain disease and six months later his two-year-old brother passed away. After the death of his father, Nietzsche and his family moved to nearby Naumburg, since the house they used to live in was reserved for the pastor and his family. In his new house, Nietzsche lived with his younger sister Elisabeth, his mother, his grandmother and his father's two sisters.

From 1858 to 1864, Nietzsche joined a boarding school, approximately 4km away from his home, in order to prepare himself for undergraduate studies. Nietzsche,

¹ Unless otherwise specified, in this section I will make use of the following source regarding Nietzsche's life and works: Wicks, Robert. "**Friedrich Nietzsche**," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/nietzsche/>>.

during his summer in Naumburg, pioneered a music and literature club and became aware of Richard Wagner's works via club's subscriptions.

After his graduation from boarding school in 1864, he attended the University of Bonn, the department of Theology and Philology. With the passing of time, his interests oriented exclusively towards philology which then focused on the classical and biblical texts' interpretation. At the University of Bonn, he joined Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl's lectures and followed him to the University of Leipzig in 1865 because of his professional inspiration. In Leipzig, Nietzsche soon created his own academic reputation by means of his published essays on Theognis and Simonides, two 6th century BC poets. One of the momentous event, in this period, for the intellectual development of Nietzsche was his unintentional discovery of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in a local bookshop. Schopenhauer's atheism and his chaotic depiction of the world together with his highest acclaim of music as a form of art attracted Nietzsche's attention. And, Schopenhauerian philosophy kept penetrating into Nietzsche's mature thought.

At the age of 23, Nietzsche joined mandatory military service, but because of a heavy chest wound he was put on sick leave. After a short healing period, in 1868, he returned to the University of Leipzig and met Richard Wagner (1813-1883) at Hermann Brockhaus' house, who was Wagner's brother in law. As a common ground for Nietzsche-Wagner relation, an enthusiastic appropriation of Schopenhauerian legacy might be counted. Also, Nietzsche's interest in music since his teenage period contributed to his admiration for Wagnerian musical genius. With his own repetitive statements, Nietzsche was deeply influenced by Wagnerian cultural impact and saw his relation to Wagner the best days of his intellectual life.

In 1869, when he was 24, Nietzsche was offered a professorial position by the University of Basel at the faculty of philology in accordance with Ritschl's recommendation. Thus, he accepted and started teaching there. At Basel, Nietzsche had no any satisfactory relationship with his philology colleagues, instead he made friends with historians Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) and Franz Overbeck (1837-1905). He established one of the most enduring relationship with Overbeck and exchanged so many letters with him. And, it should be noted that Overbeck was one of his friends who came to Nietzsche's help when he devastatingly collapsed in 1889. Nietzsche's appropriation of Schopenhauer, his special interest in health, his

dissatisfaction with then German culture, Wagnerian cultural influence on him and his studies in classical philology paved the way for the production of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Although Wagner praised the book with an enthusiasm, one of this period's distinguished philologist, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (1848-1931) belittled the book and his critique not only cast a shadow upon book's reception but also negatively affected Nietzsche's class enrolments at the University of Basel.

Between 1872 and 1879, Nietzsche often paid visits to Wagner at his new house in Bayreuth, Germany. In 1873, he met Paul Rée (1849-1901) who wrote *On the Origin of Moral Feelings* (1877). In 1878, Nietzsche wrote *Human, All-Too-Human*, which is considered as a turning point in Nietzschean writing style. That turning point not only consolidated Nietzsche's friendship with Rée but also resulted in breaking with anti-Semitic Wagner. In 1879, a constellation of health problems culminated in his resignation from the professorial position at Basel. While deteriorating health problems ended Nietzsche's ten-year professorship, they contributed to another ten years of prolific intellectual biography.

From 1880 to his mental collapse in 1889, Nietzsche regularly travelled to Swiss, French Italian and German cities in a quasi-nomadic mood of existence and never stayed in a place more than several months at a time: he gave up his German citizenship and did not take Swiss citizenship. When Nietzsche was in Rome in 1882, he met Russian Lou von Salomé (1861-1937), who was at 21 and was studying theology and philosophy in Zurich. And, Nietzsche fell in love with her. Eventually, she refused to develop a romantic relationship. And, this event also affected Nietzsche's friendship with Rée, since Rée and Salomé moved to Berlin together by leaving Nietzsche behind.

In these nomadic/stateless years, we see the production of Nietzsche's main works: *Daybreak* (1881), *The Gay Science* (1882/1887), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *The Antichrist* (1888), *Ecce Homo* (1888) and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1888).

After his mental breakdown, Nietzsche stayed in a sanatorium in Basel in 1889, and his mother in March 1890 took him from hospital back to home. He lived under his mother's care for seven years. In 1897 after his mother died, Nietzsche's sister

Elisabeth took responsibility for Nietzsche's care. Elisabeth was in Paraguay since 1886, working together with her husband Bernhard Förster to create an anti-Semitic, Aryan German colony named 'New Germany'. In 1893, She returned to Naumburg from Paraguay. In order to bring Nietzsche's works into prominence, Elisabeth rented a large house in Weimar and moved Nietzsche and his manuscripts here. In fact, later on this house would be called 'Nietzsche Archives'. Let us look at some of Nietzsche's work in detail.

In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche puts forward the idea that at the bottom of all creative activities there are non-rational, healthy, instinctual and amoral forces called 'Dionysian' energy. According to Nietzsche, this Dionysian element dates back to pre-Socratic Greek culture. He sees an antagonistic relation between Dionysian and what he calls Apollonian forces. To him, the latter identified with Socrates' logical order historically diminished the former's creative potential. And, his conclusion is that European culture since Socrates' philosophy has been exclusively Apollonian to the detriment of Dionysian forces. For the emancipation of Dionysian element, Nietzsche suggests that Dionysian artistic forces should totally be released by means of German music of his time such as Bachian, Beethovenian and especially Wagnerian form.

Nietzsche has an unpublished essay called *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (1873). While some interpreters consider it as a cornerstone in his philosophy, others see it peripheral, conflicted and non-representative. In this piece of writing, Nietzsche rejects the existence of universal and absolute truth, claiming that what we call truth is not more than a constellation of fluctuating, inconsistent metaphors and anthropomorphisms. To him, human being has created concepts just for practical purposes, in general for his survival. So, he concludes that concepts cannot depict and capture the reality, just because it has a multi-layered existence. In fact, in his later works, we see that he prefers perspectivism as a kind of method to any conceptualization of truth.

From 1873 to 1876, Nietzsche wrote the *Untimely Observations* consisting of four studies. These studies are: *David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer* (1873), *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874), *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876). In general terms, Nietzsche in these studies criticizes the quality of European culture in his time's Germany. For

example, in the case of David Strauss, Nietzsche considers his thought as a vulgar cultural degeneration epitomizing general atmosphere of German culture. To Nietzsche, Strauss tries to establish a 'new faith' which rests upon a scientifically determined all-encompassing mechanism. In *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, Nietzsche suggests alternative ways of writing for the discipline of history and shows how these alternatives can set the stage for a healthy form of society. For him, interests of 'life' should be at the center of quest for knowledge. In *Schopenhauer as Educator* and *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, he puts Wagner and Schopenhauer into the category of artistic and philosophic genius and claims that they have a potential to inspire a higher form of cultural paradigm.

Nietzsche wrote *Human, All-Too-Human* in 1878. Later on, however, he added two more parts to it: *Mixed opinions and Maxims* (1879) and *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (1880). In 1886, all of them were published under the title of *Human, All-Too-Human, A Book for Free Spirits*. This book consists of hundreds of aphorisms, as Nietzsche in this period was unwilling to create a philosophical 'system' and gave importance to the style of writing. Here, he frequently contemplates cultural and psychological issues with regard to human being's physiological constitutions. And, the notion of power is occasionally used as an explicatory principle.

In *Daybreak* (1881), in addition to his aphoristic style, Nietzsche begins articulating the significance of the 'feeling of power' in his analysis of moral behaviors. In that regard, this work encompasses some basic elements of his notion of 'will to power'.

Approximately one year later, *The Gay Science* (1882) came up. Here, Nietzsche pronounces some of his famous metaphysical ideas like 'God is dead' and the doctrine of eternal recurrence. In fact, 'God is dead' is put into circulation as a reaction to the idea of a single and absolute transcendental authority which determines not only people's formal codes of conduct but also has a say in our deep-down thoughts and feelings. Correspondingly, the doctrine of eternal recurrence contains the idea that there is no any transcendental world other than the one in which we are born.

Nietzsche considered *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885) as among his most important. It is basically a manifesto of Nietzsche's own self-overcoming and has an aim to inspire others to follow the same path. Similar to pre-Socratic naturalist

philosophy, Nietzsche used so many nature metaphors in this work so as to depict spiritual development of Zarathustra. Here, spiritually the higher mode of existence materializes in the form of what Nietzsche calls superhuman. Yet, it should be noted that whether the notion of superhuman is central to Nietzsche's thought is a matter of discussion among scholars since this figure substantially comes to existence only in this book.

Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), tries to depict the qualities of the philosophers of the future. Living dangerously, self-assertiveness, and creation of values are being counted among these qualities. Here, Nietzsche situates his thought beyond good and evil and attacks traditional morality's position that scorns exploitation, subjugation of the weak, domination and destruction. To him, being alive means that you should discharge your strength and your 'will to power'.

In Nietzsche's own word, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) is a polemic against the premises and methodology of some works such as Paul Rée's. In accordance with Darwinist and utilitarianist assumptions, Rée puts forward a naturalistic description of moral values. For Nietzsche, this approach does not deal with the value of our moral values themselves. He claims that when we go back to the origin of Christian values, what we see is not more than cowardice, resentment, hatred, revenge and impotence: all of which is called 'slave morality' by Nietzsche. And, to him, feelings of guilt and bad conscience are just transformations of our natural inclinations into criminal objects. As an alternative to Christian moral ideals, he supports reevaluation of all values which stems from self-confidence, self-governance and Dionysian commending self-assertiveness.

In this study, we shall mainly try to examine the perspectives analyzing the political impact of Nietzsche's philosophy and at the same time politicization of Nietzschean legacy. Accordingly, in chapter 1, we basically have two goals, each of which is related to each other. First, it is necessary to situate Nietzsche's orientation toward politics and political domain, before analyzing his political influence and politicization of his legacy which is the problematic of the second and third chapters. Thus, we shall try to find an answer to the following question: Is Nietzsche really anti-political as he proclaimed or are there different ways to understand this pronouncement in a much more different sense? In that regard, we shall make use of Andrew Heywood's multidimensional conceptualizations of politics while trying to

understand Nietzsche's political orientation. Here, Heywood's analytical framework shall be a context through which we can detect Nietzsche's position vis a vis sphere of politics. Mapping out Nietzsche's orientation toward politics shall pave the way for a deeper understanding of second and third chapter's problematics, namely political influence of Nietzsche and politicization of Nietzsche. Second, whether Nietzsche, as he himself proclaimed, is the 'last anti-political German' or not, we shall look at some of his concepts, that have political implications, such as perspectivism, aristocratism and the will to power. It must be conceded that Nietzschean concepts with political implications are not restricted to only those mentioned. Our aim here is not to give an exhaustive list and analysis of Nietzsche's conceptualizations with regard to politics. The reason behind choosing just three of them is that they had/have a predominant effect not only on theoretical positions like postmodern theory and feminist theory as in the case of the notion of perspectivism, but also on political movements like National Socialism as in the case of the notions of aristocratism and especially the will to power. And, it should be noted that not only in this chapter but throughout our study, while dealing with this thesis' problematics we shall just take Nietzsche scholarship into account. In other words, we shall try to find answers to our questions within Nietzsche scholarship, instead of within Nietzsche's own texts.

In chapter 2, we shall look at Nietzsche through the perspectives of Walter Kaufmann, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, Sarah Kofman and Feminism in general. Thus, this chapter shall set a preliminary stage for a partial understanding of chapter 3's content of argumentation, namely dynamics behind the politicization of Nietzsche. It must be at the beginning conceded that to cover exhaustively these figures' Nietzschean aspects is not this chapter's main aim. Moreover, neither does this chapter deal with all figures that appropriate Nietzschean legacy in some way or another. Rather, this chapter's main concern is to give a general idea that no one can claim the existence of a clear-cut Nietzschean legacy; Nietzschean corpus is open to plural and equally legitimate readings, none of which is superior to one another. This chapter is directly related to chapter 3 in the sense that it helps us to perceive National Socialism as only one interpretation among so many others. Moreover, it is among this chapter's main concerns that we shall see Nietzsche's different political influences in the case of Kaufmann, Rorty, Foucault and Kofman. For example,

while we shall see a liberal, postmodern Nietzsche in the case of Rorty, we shall see Nietzsche as an object of psychoanalysis in the case of Kofman. As for Kaufmann, we shall see Nietzsche as an object of denazification. When it comes to Foucault, we shall see Nietzsche as a master and philosopher of power-knowledge-truth nexus. We shall examine feminist epistemology's tactical appropriation of Nietzschean legacy. And, we shall look at the political dimension behind this tactical appropriation.

In chapter 3, we shall mainly deal with three points. First, we shall look at the issue of National Socialism through an analysis of Nietzsche scholarship. In that regard, we shall try to find answers to the following questions: Is there any relationship between the Nazi ideology and Nietzschean philosophy? If there is no any basis, why did Nazi ideologues see him as their ideology's forerunner? And, what kind of processes have paved the way for the association between Nazis and Nietzschean philosophy? Second, we shall deal with the Jewish question in Nietzsche scholarship. Is Nietzsche anti-Semitic? If not, how can we understand his quasi-anti-Semitic statements? Finding answers to these questions might help us understand one aspect of Nietzsche-Nazism identification, since anti-Semitism is one of the corner stone of Nazi ideology.

CHAPTER 1

1. TEXTUAL NIETZSCHE: POLITICAL, APOLITICAL OR ANTIPOLITICAL?

In this chapter, we shall mainly deal with two problematics. First, so as to properly examine political influence of Nietzsche and politicization of his philosophy, we shall try to analyze his orientation toward the sphere of politics. In this respect, we shall put his famous pronouncement, being ‘last anti-political German’, under scrutiny. While doing this, for we find it useful and applicable in terms of having multidimensional aspects, we shall make use of Andrew Heywood’s different conceptualizations of the notion of politics. In other words, Heywood shall be the conceptual framework through which we shall try to understand Nietzschean relation to the political domain. Second, regardless of the conclusion we shall reach from this first problematic, we shall analyze some Nietzschean concepts with political implications such as perspectivism, aristocratism and will to power.

Andrew Heywood, in his *Politics*, categorizes the notion of politics into four analytic conceptions: politics as the art of government; politics as public affairs; politics as compromise and consensus; politics as power. As for *politics as the art of government*,

“[T]he modern form of this definition is ... ‘what concerns the state’. This view of politics is clearly evident in the everyday use of the term: people are said to be ‘in politics’ when they hold public office, or to be ‘entering politics’ when they seek to do so”.²

He accordingly adds that:

“[P]olitics is what takes place within a polity, a system of social organization centered on the machinery of government. Politics is therefore practiced in cabinet rooms, legislative chambers, government departments... and it is

² Heywood, Andrew. 2013. **Politics**. 4th ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3.

engaged in by a limited and specific group of people, notably politicians, civil servants and lobbyists”.³

Needless to say, according to that definition, the rest of the people who stay outside the boundary of aforementioned spaces are supposed to be outside the politics, too.

Politics as public affairs, for Heywood, is pretty much a broader conceptualization than the first one. To him, this conceptualization

“...moves it beyond the narrow realm of government to what is thought of as ‘public life’ or ‘public affairs’. In other words, the distinction between ‘the political’ and ‘the non-political’ coincides with the division between an essentially public sphere of life and what can be thought of as a private sphere”.⁴

But, how and to what extent can we grasp the ontological distinction between these two domains? In the following sentences, he clearly explains it by giving concrete examples of each domain. In that regard, while he puts “family and domestic life” into the category of private sphere, he considers “politics, commerce, art, work and culture” as parts and parcels of public sphere.

Politics as compromise and consensus, Heywood argues,

“relates not to the arena within which politics is conducted but to the way in which decisions are made. Specifically, politics is seen as a particular means of resolving conflict: that is, by compromise, conciliation and negotiation, rather than through force and naked power”.⁵

In that sense, what we call in daily life ‘political solution’, Heywood maintains, is diametrically opposed to the notion of ‘military solution’. The importance of this conceptualization lies in the fact that it turns the notion of politics into a code of conduct through which we might resolve a conflict in a non-militaristic way.

Heywood calls the last conception of politics, *politics as power*, “the broadest and most radical”.⁶ For him, “Rather than confining politics to a particular sphere (the government, the state or the ‘public’ realm), this view sees politics at work in all social activities and in every corner of human existence”.⁷ Here, the notion of politics is actually quite similar to Foucauldian “microphysics of power”. Very basically, it refers to the power circulating not through direct state coercion; rather, through

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

sophisticated and covert mechanisms among people and their bodies. From this standpoint, power as a politics exists in almost every kind of social relations.

Bearing in mind these conceptualizations of the notion politics, we will return to them time to time when trying to situate Nietzsche's orientation toward politics. Hence, Heywood's framework will help us grasp the multidimensional aspect of Nietzsche's relation to the sphere of politics, and to the issue of "political".

Relevant to this point, Bergoffen asks: "Did Nietzsche see himself as a political thinker? If so, what were his politics? If not, why have others insisted on politicizing him?"⁸ Also, it is worth to add Siemens and Shapiro's question: "Is Nietzsche a political thinker at all, or an antipolitical philosopher of values and culture?"⁹ In this chapter, while we will try to find answers, within Nietzsche scholarship, of Bergoffen's first and second question, his last question will be dealt with in chapter 3. Since Siemens and Shapiro's question is directly related to the topic of this section, it will thoroughly be dealt with in here.

Robert Guay states that "Nietzsche alternately affiliates himself with positions that are 'unpolitical', 'indifferent toward politics', or most famously, 'antipolitical'".¹⁰ Considering these statements, what shall we do? Shall we take what Nietzsche pronounces for granted or should we always take Spiekermann-like warnings about Nietzsche:

"Nietzsche is a multiple personality thinker...we have to realize that most of his statements often quoted affirmatively by his exegetes as proofs... are formulated as experimental hypotheses. We should always ask: what else could he have meant when he says this?"¹¹

With this in mind, let us return to the issue of the 'apolitical' and analyze the contextual basis of this statement.

Tongeren argues that:

⁸ Bergoffen, Debra B. 1990. Posthumous Popularity: Reading, Privileging, Politicizing Nietzsche. **An Interdisciplinary Journal**, Vol. 73, No. 1. Penn State University Press, p. 40.

⁹ Siemens, Herman & Shapiro, Gary. 2008. Guest Editor's Introduction: What Does Nietzsche Mean for Contemporary Politics and Political Thought? **Journal of Nietzsche Studies**, No. 35/36, Penn State University Press, p. 3.

¹⁰ Guay, Robert. 2013. Movements and Motivations: Nietzsche and the Invention of Political Psychology. In Keith Ansell-Pearson (Ed.), **Nietzsche and Political Thought**. London, England: Bloomsbury, p. 55.

¹¹ Spiekermann, Klaus. 1999. Nietzsche and Critical Theory. In Babette Babich and Robert. S. Cohen (Eds.), **Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, and Critical Theory: Nietzsche and the Sciences 1. Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science**, Vol. 203. London, England: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 239.

“[W]hile Nietzsche did call himself ‘the last anti-political German’, there are reasons not to attach too much importance to that expression: Nietzsche only used it in an earlier version of *Ecce Homo* and he ultimately skipped that passage, and an ‘anti-political German’ is not by itself also an ‘anti-political thinker’”.¹²

Moreover, Tongeren states:

“...there is at least one sense in which this expression signals his being precisely a political thinker: for if Nietzsche calls himself ‘the last anti-political German’, he thereby opposes the political thought of his day and hence expresses his thoughts on politics”.¹³

In fact, what we at first sight understand from this argumentation is that if someone verbalizes his views on political issues, he is supposedly a political thinker. Contrarily, Tongeren is well aware of the situation:

“...one cannot call someone a political thinker only because he/she has expressed some thoughts on politics or on political topics. Instead, we should only call someone a political philosopher if politics is in some way or another the main topic or the leading perspective of his/her thinking”.¹⁴

Couple of sentences ahead, he explains the reason behind seeing Nietzsche as ‘supra-political thinker’: “I think that Nietzsche more often speaks about apparently political topics from a perspective which is not primarily political”.¹⁵ For example, Tongeren gives the example of Nietzsche’s use of democracy as a word not in a political sense; rather in a cultural sense.

On the other hand, Dombowsky argues:

“Nietzsche’s antipolitics constitutes a politics. All of his works contain political commentary, and some of them even commentary on political economy, which consists primarily of antidemocratic polemics. In turn, this political commentary has its basis in political theory, a theory of what politics is and what it should be...”.¹⁶

Dombowsky is somewhat free from Tongeren’s criticism, since he brings an additional parameter to the formulation by emphasizing that Nietzsche has a politics he not only articulates as commentary on politics, but these articulations have a basis

¹² Tongeren, Paul van. 2008. Nietzsche as ‘Über-Politischer Denker’. In Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Eds.), **Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought**. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, p. 69.

¹³ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶ Dombowsky, Don. 2004. **Nietzsche’s Machiavellian Politics**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 1.

in political theory. If Nietzsche has a politics as Dombowsky claims, what kind of characteristics does it have? He argues that:

“Nietzsche’s philosophy of politics and power is informed by Machiavellian principles. He consistently holds...to the distinction between the ruler type and the ruled type, elite and masses, master and slave, to the doctrine of the necessity of social rankings and subordinations, at least where higher culture is concerned”.¹⁷

Moreover, Dombowsky adds other convergent points between Machiavelli and Nietzsche: “...anti-Christianity, the subordination of morality to politics, the emphasis on power in political analysis, the need for opponents or enemies and the view that the state has its foundation in immoralism and violence”.¹⁸ After calling Nietzsche ‘a disciple of Machiavelli’ Dombowsky answers the question of why Nietzsche did actually need Machiavelli: “Machiavelli complements Nietzsche’s anti-Platonism, his anti-Christianity and his naturalistic morality”.¹⁹ Against some intellectuals arguing that for Nietzsche morality is of primary importance, not politics, Dombowsky puts forward the following argument: “...for Nietzsche all morality is a form of politics...Nietzsche reduces the moral to the political. This reduction of morality to politics is evident in the fact that Nietzsche defines morality ‘as the doctrine of the relations of supremacy’...”.²⁰

Regarding Nietzsche’s so-called ‘anti-politics’, Cominos proposes a somewhat different reading. The notion of anti-politics, he argues,

“...is best construed as the polemic of a defender and promoter of culture, seen to enlarge the possibilities of genuinely human being. His primary target is the politicization of culture, which demeans the individual and limits the potential of human being to reach beyond its current incarnations”.²¹

Cominos gives us a comprehensive approach to the issue of anti-politics through an analysis of relevant texts: “Nietzsche’s ‘anti-politics’ is variously interpreted by commentators as a wholesale dismissal of the political domain, a rejection of ‘petty’ party politics and/or nationalism, or fundamental opposition to the modern secular

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

²¹ Cominos, Marina. 2008. The question of Nietzsche’s Anti-Politics and Human Transfiguration. In Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Eds.), **Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought**. Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, p. 86.

state”.²² He counts Walter Kaufmann’s efforts among those who consider Nietzsche as a figure dismissing the political domain. In Cominos words,

“Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche is ‘basically “antipolitical”’ insofar as his teachings pertain to the radically individual pursuit of ‘self-perfection’. According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche’s work organized around the idea of self-creation, which may be understood by analogy to painting a self-portrait, possible only outside the polity...”.²³

Many of the works considering Nietzsche as ‘antipolitical’, in fact, see in his works an antagonistic relation between culture and state. Needless to say, the notion of state in here is what Heywood call ‘politics as the art of government’. In that sense, Cominos explains this antagonism in the following words:

“While the state’s main aim is to preserve itself, the bearers of culture press towards their own transfiguration. This explains, in part, Nietzsche’s contempt for progressive political movements, whose ends of ‘happiness’ and ‘contentment’ run counter to the cultural strivings that carry humankind to greater heights”.²⁴

Keith Ansell-Pearson too articulates the meaning of the notions of state and culture for Nietzsche in similar terms:

“The modern state engages in a ‘power-politics’ and finds itself dominated by nationalist and militarist concerns and ambitions. It fails to see that politics is simply a means to an end, that of the production of true or great human beings and the perpetual self-overcoming of ‘man’”.²⁵

Burnham gives couple of reasons for Nietzsche’s objection to nationalism:

“first, its conception of the unity of a people is generally imaginary...second, it sustains this conception by the exclusion of others...third, the nation or state is exactly the wrong mechanism for bringing about cultural unity and certainly for bringing about cultural greatness”.²⁶

As can be seen, we once again come across the critique of any political concept, namely nationalism, for the sake of culture. Here, it must be conceded that the aim of Nietzsche is not total destruction of the state as a political unity. As Shaw emphasized,

“Nietzsche does not advocate the overthrow of the state. In fact, ... stable political authority is a necessary precondition for the kinds of human

²² Ibid., p. 87.

²³ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁵ Ansell-Pearson, Keith. 1994. **An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The perfect nihilist**. Cambridge University Press, p. 11.

²⁶ Burnham, Douglas. 2015. **The Nietzsche Dictionary**. London: Bloomsbury, p. 230.

achievements that he values. But he cannot concede to the state the kind of ideological power that maintenance of its authority seems to require”.²⁷

But, at that stage, we should ask the following question: Why was Nietzsche so skeptical about state’s ideological boundaries? According to Shaw:

“Since the state...cannot tolerate anyone who ‘applies the scalpel of truth’ to politically necessary faith, it has an interest in having broad control over intellectual life, and particularly the disciplines of history and philosophy...the Rankean German historical school was in fact largely subservient to the Reich”.²⁸

We will turn to the issue of social hierarchy and its derivative conceptions below, but since we deal with the superiority of culture over politics in Nietzsche corpus, I wish to quote from Mark Fowler in order to complement as far as possible the problematic relations between Nietzsche and the sphere of politics: “Given this Nietzschean link between social hierarchy and the cultivation of the creative soul, it is obvious that any attempt to depoliticize Nietzsche must utterly fail, and in fact he incessantly presents himself as a political thinker”.²⁹ Keith Ansell-Pearson mentions two sorts of politics in Nietzsche corpus for his readers. “One is a less well-known ‘politics of survival’, which consists not in legislating new values and law-tables for man, but in playing in parodic and ironic fashion with the ideals of humanity”.³⁰ The so-called politics of survival is indeed much more related to the question of style, appropriated by the bulk of the postmodern intellectuals, both in their writing and in their life style in general. The other kind of politics is, Ansell-Pearson maintains, “the more familiar ‘politics of cruelty’ associated with Nietzsche’s aristocratic radicalism. Here the aim is to gain control of the forces of history and produce...a new humanity”.³¹ This point will be examined in detail when we examine Nietzschean concepts below, such as will to power and aristocratism.

Bergoffen writes, “[G]od is dead. The reign of the absolute collapses. Unable like Hamlet’s Gertrude to go directly from the funeral to the festival, we enter a period of mourning. Nihilism, fascism, the terror, the abyss-these are the figures of our loss”.³² In that sense, Nietzsche tried to create new values for humanity, via a new

²⁷ Shaw, Tamsin. 2007. **Nietzsche’s Political Skepticism**. Princeton University Press, p. 14.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

²⁹ Fowler, Mark. 1990. Nietzschean Perspectivism: “How Could Such a Philosophy-Dominate?”. **Social Theory and Practice**, Vol. 16, No. 2, Florida State University Department of Philosophy, p. 142.

³⁰ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p.147.

³¹ Ibid., p. 147.

³² Ibid., Bergoffen, p. 56.

understanding of politics, so as to bring solutions to the problems of nihilism in his period. Thus, in Sedgwick's words, "...one can neither entirely separate Nietzsche's name from politics, nor fit him conveniently within a political agenda".³³ We thus conclude in Sadler's terms: "Nietzsche really rejects only a certain kind of politics, or...there are 'political implications' of his thought which Nietzsche himself does not pursue".³⁴



³³ Sedgwick, Peter R. 2009. **Nietzsche: The Key Concepts**. London and New York: Routledge, p. 124-125.

³⁴ Sadler, Ted. 1993. The postmodernist politicization of Nietzsche. In Paul Patton (Ed.), **Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory**, London and New York: Routledge, p. 226.

2. THE PREDOMINANT NIETZSCHEAN CONCEPTS WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1. Perspectivism

“The deeper meaning of ‘perspectivism’”, for Sadler, “is that there is no such thing as One truth but rather a multiplicity of mutually inconsistent ‘truths’ dependent on the particular conditions constituting different kinds of discourse”.³⁵ Here, ‘One truth’ can be properly understood as what in postmodern theory has been called ‘absolute truth’. Correspondingly, Robinson asks a historical question: “If history shows us that there have been widely different accounts of how the universe is constructed, what guarantee do we have that our current model is the correct one?”³⁶ Robinson continues to argue that “Nietzsche’s doctrine of ‘perspectivism claims that there can only ever be imperfect interpretations and never absolute truths about the world’”.³⁷ The matter is, is there any relation between the principle of perspectivism and anti-dogmatism and/or anti-foundationalism? “What this doctrine claims, in terms of a theory of truth,” Dombowsky argues,

“is that all truth-claims are interpretations connected to specific human interests and practices. They neither correspond to nor can be grounded in any transcendent world or objective essences. It has as its consequences anti-foundationalism, anti-dogmatism and a suspicion of unconditional authority”.³⁸

Dombosky explains the relation of ‘perspectivism’ to the cartesian subject and Kantian pure reason in the following words:

“Nietzschean perspectivism...constitutes a critique of the Cartesian res cogitans and Kantian pure reason, and the idea of disinterested knowledge. As a methodological corrective to the latter idea, Nietzschean genealogy inquires after the particular active and interpreting forces which comprise any particular perspective...”.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid., p. 229.

³⁶ Robinson, Dave. 1999. **Nietzsche and Postmodernism**. USA: Totem Books, p. 21.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

³⁸ Ibid., Dombowsky, p. 82.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

Clark's point of emphasis is the theoretical relation between perspectivism and affect. For her, "...perspectivism is...a metaphorical formulation of the claim that knowledge is acquired only by means of the focus and interest supplied by affect".⁴⁰

She continues to argue that:

"[S]o interpreted, perspectivism has no skeptical implications. Its point is not that there are different truths from different perspectives, or that perspectives constitute their objects, but only that different affects call our attention to or reveal different features of reality".⁴¹

In accordance with these points, Bergoffen elaborates on the affect-perspective relation:

"For Nietzsche's style of philosophizing, it is not the abstract idea that of interest, but the who and why of the idea. Who speaks? What desire speaks? What concatenation of forces speak? These are the questions pursued by a philosophy that takes as its task the critique and de-mystification of given truths and values".⁴²

Bergoffen also elaborates on Richard Schacht's analysis of Nietzschean perspectivism. After mentioning that Schacht does not consider perspectivism as a "doctrine of subjectivist relativism or a mode of pragmatism", he argues, Schacht proposes a "three layered theory of truth with perspectivism functioning differently at each level".⁴³ Bergoffen continues to argue:

"[A]t the first level perspectivism is a variation of Wittgenstein's language game theory. At the second it is a genealogical asking about the relationship between truths and the values they create and sustain. At the third it carries epistemic significance regarding what goes on in the world".⁴⁴

Regarding the first layer's relevance to the language, Bergoffen writes that "...Nietzsche argues for the perspectival nature of language considers the difference between words, which in their metaphoric flexibility can be given new meanings, and the things represented by them, which appeared fixed".⁴⁵

However, is it really possible to make a clear-cut distinction between perspectivism and relativism? "Perspectivism as a theory of language and meaning", Bergoffen maintains,

⁴⁰ Clark, Maudemarie. **Nietzsche on Ethics and Politics**. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 160.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 160.

⁴² Ibid., Bergoffen, p. 45.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

“cannot be severed from perspectivism as a theory of value. Perspectivism as a theory of value, however, is extremely difficult to distinguish from the relativism that begins benignly enough by tolerating everything and ends brutally enough by affirming its right to tolerate only itself”.⁴⁶

Considering these points as related to the critique of cartesian subject and the relativistic aspect of perspectivism, Hatab optimistically articulates:

“Nietzsche’s celebration of perspectivism, the openness of identity, and agonistic dynamism can prepare a vision of democratic life that is more vibrant, inclusive, creative, and life-affirming than that of modern political theories grounded in the rational subject”.⁴⁷

If there is not an absolute truth; If rationality is not the ultimate reference of the epistemological investigations and if every perspective has an equal value, what will happen to the traditional notion of objectivity? Nietzsche’s “reconstituted notion of objectivity”, Conway argues,

“...suggests that knowledge is a function of the embodied expression of our affective investment in the world. His perspectivism thus presupposes an account of subjects as radically situated, that is affectively invested, in the world and in their bodies”.⁴⁸

Couple of sentences ahead, he gives more detail on Nietzschean reconstituted notion of objectivity: That notion “...encourages a maximal expression of affective investment in the world –a chorus of radically situated ‘voices’– and thus stands 180 degrees removed from the traditional epistemological goal of disinterested, disaffected contemplation”.⁴⁹ Diprose explains the same argument in different terms: “‘Objectivity’, rather, is about embracing the interestedness and desire inherent in my perspective, taking up the creative, dynamic plasticity of perspectivity, and taking this to the limit to open up new perspectives”.⁵⁰

2.2. Aristocratism

Fowler mentions Nietzsche’s enthusiastic approval of the title, namely ‘aristocratic radicalism’, George Brandes used for him, in the following terms: “It is Nietzsche himself, after all, who enthusiastically endorses George Brandes’s political

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁷ Hatab, Lawrence J. 2002. Prospects for a Democratic Agon: Why We Can Still Be Nietzschean. **Journal of Nietzsche Studies**, No. 24, Penn State University Press, p. 132.

⁴⁸ Conway, Daniel W. 1993. Das Weib an sich: The slave revolt in epistemology. In Paul Patton (Ed.), **Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory**, London and New York: Routledge, p. 112.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁵⁰ Diprose, Rosalyn. 2013. Nietzsche on Truth, Honesty and Responsibility in Politics. In Keith Ansell-Pearson (Ed.), **Nietzsche and Political Thought**. London, England: Bloomsbury, p. 28.

description of him as a radical aristocrat...”.⁵¹ If so, what is the content and nature of that title for Nietzsche? Call gives some clue on that question: “...an elitist ideology which asserted that the meaning and value of any society could be assessed by judging the extent to which that society paved the way for the development of superior individuals”.⁵² For Nietzsche, these superior individuals must be in the form of Goethe, Napoleon Bonaparte, Cesare Borgia and so on. Clark argues that:

“...when Nietzsche writes of an aristocratic society, he refers not to a governmental institution, but to a society that believes in ‘an order of rank and differences in value between human beings’—and this is wholly consistent with, for example, a democratic political structure”.⁵³

To support his argument regarding the democratic aspect of Nietzsche, she states that even Nietzsche’s approval of slavery is consistent with democracy since the notion of slavery for Nietzsche includes scholars and scientists. Correspondingly, Ansell-Pearson states that “...Nietzsche makes it clear that what interests him about an aristocratic code of morality is not so much the political power a ruling class wields, but rather the ‘typical character traits’ by which it defines and affirms itself”.⁵⁴ However, Hatab has some reservations about Nietzsche’s egalitarian aspect: “My take has been that Nietzsche indeed is anti-egalitarian but that egalitarianism may not be the sine qua non of democratic politics, and that many elements of democratic practice and performance are more Nietzschean than he suspected...”.⁵⁵

Is there a concrete example or any approximation of Nietzsche’s ideal of an aristocratic society?

“In the Hindu Laws of Manu”, Dombowsky argues, “Nietzsche finds an approximation...namely, an aristocratic social structure...based on a hierarchical order of rank or order of castes, where rights and duties are not shared, ruled by the ‘most spiritual human beings’, the noble class, who are beyond good and evil”.⁵⁶

He also adds that:

“...at the basis of his politics, Nietzsche divides ‘all living creatures’ into either ‘obeying creatures’ or ‘commanding creatures’, but his political position is

⁵¹ Ibid., Fowler, p. 142.

⁵² Call, Lewis. 2001. *Toward an Anarchy of Becoming: Postmodern Anarchism in Nietzschean Philosophy*. **Journal of Nietzsche Studies**, No. 21, Penn State University Press, p. 48.

⁵³ Ibid., Clark, p. 194.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Ansell- Pearson, p.129.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Hatab, p. 133.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Dombowsky., p. 61.

elitist or aristocratic in so far as he assigns the attribute of command to the few or a minority”.⁵⁷

In fact, apparently this point regarding the nature of Nietzschean elitism and aristocratism runs counter to Hatab’s claims concerning Nietzsche’s democratic aspect. Nietzsche as a self-proclaimed ‘immoralist’, anti-Christian and anti-Christ, to Conway,

“recommends the use of state-sponsored religions to elevate the demos against its will...state-sponsored religions ...furnish and perpetuate the sustaining myths of a hierarchically organized society, which in turn supply ‘ordinary human beings’ with the solace and comfort they need”.⁵⁸

Though ‘immoralism’ and religion seem at first sight mutually exclusive categories, immoralism as a notion encompasses using even religion as means to an end.

In a period wherein all values devalue themselves and god is dead, how does Nietzschean aristocratism can build its legitimacy? Nietzsche, Conway argues,

“seeks to legitimate aristocratic rule through a notion of culture. The legitimacy of the new artist-tyrants he speaks of, is not ‘moral’ but ‘supra-moral...They do not legitimate their actions in humanist terms, but by appealing to the necessity of overcoming ‘man’”.⁵⁹

Let us very briefly touch on Nietzschean ‘great politics’ as a related conception to aristocratism. As can be seen in the first part, Abbey and Appel argues that:

“...while those who read Nietzsche as non – or anti-political are correct to claim that he denounces ‘petty politics’, they fail to consider that this is in the name of a higher, grander conception of the political, one that includes cultural-cum-ethical concerns”.⁶⁰

Dombosky sees the notion of great politics as a supplement for other Nietzschean concepts: Great politics “is a term that supplements the revaluation of all values as a ‘declaration of war’ and indicates that the revaluation of all values is also a politics”.⁶¹ “The task of ‘great politics’”, Conway argues, “is neither destroy nor to transcend the all-too-human within us, but to bring the all-too-human to completion and perfection”.⁶²

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁸ Conway, Daniel W. 1997. **Nietzsche & the Political**. London and New York: Routledge, p. 36.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 154.

⁶⁰ Abbey, Ruth & Appel, Fredrick. 1998. Nietzsche and the Will to Politics. **The Review of Politics**, Vol. 60, No. 1, Cambridge University Press for the University of Notre Dame du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, p. 91.

⁶¹ Ibid., Dombowsky, p. 51.

⁶² Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 12.

2.3. Will to Power

Before turning to the principle of will to power, we should take a quick look at the Nietzschean notion of will. For Nietzsche, the will, Dombosky writes, “is not simple, not a faculty, but ‘a complex of sensation and thinking’. But it is ‘above all an affect, and specifically the affect of command’. To will is to command”.⁶³ In that regard, Robinson shows us the continuity between Schopenhauer’s notion of will and Nietzschean will to power in these words: For Schopenhauer, “there is only one certain truth that lies ‘behind’ our phenomenal world and that is the existence of a constant energetic struggle or ‘Will’...Nietzsche agreed, but thought that the ‘Will’ that determined everything was ‘the Will to Power’”.⁶⁴ At that point, Ansell-Pearson emphasizes an important difference between Nietzschean will to power and Schopenhauer’s will:

“Against...Schopenhauer...he argues that ‘self-preservation’ does not characterize the object or goal of the forces and energies of life. Every living thing, he holds, does all it can, not to preserve itself, but to become ‘more’...will to power refers to the desire every living thing has to grow, expand and develop...”.⁶⁵

Can we conclude a metaphysical justification for violence from these sentences? For Nietzsche, Ansell-Pearson states, “...a strong will to power does not need to dominate others; on the contrary, it is usually weak people who need to control others and employ power and violence against them. Only in this way can they gain self-esteem and confidence...”.⁶⁶ How about the strong and spiritual will to power? “A strong or noble will to power”, Ansell-Pearson continues, “...relates to others in terms of overflowing abundant, creative energy, inspiring and transforming others. It has a generous and joyous spirit or soul”.⁶⁷

Here, it is worth mentioning Dombowsky’s approach to this discussion. He attributes, the “reading Nietzsche’s will to power not as a Hobbesian will to dominate, but as a principle of differentiation or sublimated self-overcoming” to what he calls “the radical liberal democratic reading”.⁶⁸ In that line of thought, Dombowsky accepts that, “Nietzsche does not overtly advocate the use of force or

⁶³ Ibid., Dombowsky, p. 78.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Robinson, p. 11.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 47-48.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Dombowsky, p. 73.

violence as an agent of social transformation...and even condemns it, as is clear from his gradualist commentary against violent social revolution...".⁶⁹ However, he goes on to add that "...Nietzsche continually makes more covert comments (which might enable a 'spiritual' or metaphorical reading) in favor of war, and some overtly in favor of military culture".⁷⁰ Given Nietzschean principle of perspectivism, it is legitimate to put Robinson's question: "[I]f there is no 'truth' or 'knowledge', how can we accept Nietzsche's epistemological claim that all of reality can be reduced to 'energy' or Will to Power?"⁷¹ Robinson goes on to explain Nietzsche's strategy: "Nietzsche rejected all philosophy – and then produced another that looks remarkably metaphysical. His radical skepticism stems from the fact that there is but one truth – the 'Will to Power'...".⁷²

To sum up, as can be seen from the discussion above, Nietzsche is at least an advocate of war in metaphorical sense. Since consensus and war are mutually exclusive processes, he does not fit easily into the Heywood's category of politics as compromise and consensus. Also, we cannot subject him to the category of politics as art of government, for he is not a politician. However, he does fit into that category to the extent that his writings are related to 'what concerns the state' as discussed above. Because of the fact that the nature of his writings has direct relevance to the 'public life' and/or 'public affairs' and that his notion of will to power does perfectly match with the politics as power, he can be put into the category of politics as public affairs and politics as power.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

⁷¹ Ibid., Robinson, p.28.

⁷² Ibid., p. 28.

CHAPTER 2

THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON NIETZSCHE

In this chapter, we shall try to understand basically three points. First, we shall endeavor to find an answer to the following question: what are the reasons stemming from Nietzschean legacy itself behind different interpretations of Nietzsche? Second, we shall look at Nietzsche through the perspectives of Walter Kaufmann, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault and Sarah Kofman. Examining these figures separately, on the one hand, shall give us some clues regarding Nietzschean political influence on them, on the other hand, it shall help us to consider National Socialism as only one interpretation of Nietzsche among so many others. In that sense, this chapter shall prepare us for chapter 3's problematics.

Regarding the proliferation of Nietzsche interpretations, Robinson says that "There have been poets and playwrights, anarchist and fascists, existentialists and postmodernist who have all described themselves as 'Nietzschean'. So there seems to be a different Nietzsche for every age".⁷³ Aschheim explains the same issue in these terms: "Each generation, I suggest, constructs its own, most appropriate Nietzsche – or Nietzsches".⁷⁴ So, what kind of dynamics would, on Nietzsche's part, motivates this proliferation of readings? "For all of his complaints about the numbing inadequacies of his readers", Conway argues,

"however, he did virtually everything in his power to encourage confusion and misunderstanding. Shifting masks, multiple personae, polytropaic paroxysm, nested ironies and self-referential parodies, wayward textual strategies, hastily conceived thought experiments...have contributed to the bewilderment of his readers".⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁴ Aschheim, Steven E. 1997. Nietzsche, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. In Jacob Golomb (Ed.), **Nietzsche and Jewish Culture**, London and New York: Routledge, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 115.

However, Bergoffen gives us some clues about dynamics stemming from Nietzsche's own readers: "...different readings of Nietzsche are related to decisions to privilege certain works over others...".⁷⁶ Woodward adds another factor for this plural reading:

"...many of his notes were published posthumously, and whether or not these ought to be taken into serious account in understanding his thought remains a matter of debate. These are just a few of the reasons that the meaning of Nietzsche's work is plural...".⁷⁷

No doubt, 'many of his notes' here first and foremost refers to the notes brought together under the title of 'Will to Power'.

Walter Kaufmann's Nietzsche

After stating that "In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche envisioned a day in which chairs in philosophy would be endowed in universities devoted to the interpretation of his work", Rathbone maintains,

"[H]alf a century later, Nietzsche's vision materialized at Princeton in the shape of Walter Kaufmann, a brilliant multi-lingual German-born Jew, who explained how the invasions worked by the Nazis included not only the occupation of...countries, but also of Nietzsche's works...".⁷⁸

Rathbone, also, explains the reason behind Kaufmann's outlook and his aim in these terms: Kaufmann's interpretation of Nietzsche

"was...quite literally shaped by his experiences during the second world war, and he aims to establish not only that the Nazi's 'use' of Nietzsche was in fact an abuse, but further, that it is only in Nietzsche's thought...that the resources necessary to root out the deeper problem of which the Nazis were but a symptom...".⁷⁹

In the same paragraph, he explains this symptom: "the human desire for revenge, which Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*". Aschheim explains Kaufmann's aim in the following terms:

"...the basic aim of Nietzsche's most insistent and influential post-war expositor, translator and popularizer, Walter Kaufmann, was casuistically to rid

⁷⁶ Ibid., Bergoffen, p. 41.

⁷⁷ Woodward, Ashley. 2011. Whose Nietzsche? In Ashley Woodward (Ed.), **Interpreting Nietzsche: Reception and Influence**, New York: Continuum, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Ibid, David Rathbone, 'Kaufmann's Nietzsche' in **Interpreting Nietzsche: Reception and Influence**, p.51.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 51-52.

Nietzsche of...sullied associations and provide him with the kind of liberal-humanist face consistent with American academic values of the time".⁸⁰

Aschheim completes the related paragraph with words portraying Kaufmann's Nietzsche like this:

"Essentially a good European, he was a thinker who had to be grasped in terms of his emphases on creativity, culture and critical individualism and whose dismissal of nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism could not have been more apparent".⁸¹

On the other hand, Bergoffen criticizes Kaufmann's aim. "Most contemporary readers of Nietzsche defer to Kaufmann's translations", Bergoffen argues,

"as they distance themselves from his existentialist-humanist interpretations. Kaufmann's Nietzsche is too domesticated, too much a product of the project to release him from the Nazi stigma, too removed from the radical implications of his thought".⁸²

Is there a continuum or set of discontinuities within Nietzsche's intellectual biography and what are the characteristics of this continuum or discontinuity, for Kaufmann? For Rathbone, "Kaufmann divides Nietzsche into 'early' and 'late', describing Nietzsche's early work as dualistic, revolving around the Apollo-Dionysus opposition, and his late work as monistic, revolving around the 'single principle' of will to power".⁸³ As can be recalled from the discussion about will to power above, there are mainly two camps with regard to the meaning of will to power: on the one hand, those restricting its meaning totally to the will to dominate and will to survive; on the other hand, those claiming that this notion is related to another Nietzschean principle, namely self-overcoming. How can we situate Kaufmann's position with regard to this discussion of will to power? For Kaufmann, "...the notion of will to power should not be confused with a mere will to dominate", Rathbone argues, "...To be thoughtful, to be helpful, to be kind and careful: these are higher forms of the will to power than mere violence, cruelty, and greed, precisely because to be loved and respected is a higher form of life than to be reviled, feared and despised".⁸⁴ "Nor should will to power be confused with the mere will to survive", Rathbone continues with the argument, "will to power is a will to

⁸⁰ Ibid., Aschheim, p. 4.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸² Ibid., Bergoffen, p. 33.

⁸³ Ibid., Rathbone, p. 57.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 57.

expenditure, for life can only find and modify its limits through exhaustion”.⁸⁵ After criticizing Kaufmann in these terms: “Nietzsche was denazified by Walter Kaufmann in 1950...But Kaufmann went beyond the mere denazification of Nietzsche and performed a general depoliticization of his thought”, Dombosky expresses his views with regard to Kaufmann’s reading of the principle of will to power. “At the core of Kaufmann’s reading”, Dombowsky holds, “was the offensive reduction of Nietzsche’s concept of will to power to ‘an apolitical principle of personal, existential self-overcoming and self-transcendence’”.⁸⁶

Does Nietzsche, to Kaufmann, have a philosophical system or is he an ardent unsystematic philosopher as some intellectuals say? On Rathbone’s account: “Kaufmann recognizes a kind of system in Nietzsche’s thought, while also insisting that to see Nietzsche’s thought as nothing but this system is to fall into an error which Kaufmann calls ‘reductionism’”.⁸⁷ If Kaufmann thinks that Nietzsche has a system, what is it and what are its principles? “...Nietzsche’s system”, Rathbone states,

“revolves around a triangulation of the three rubrics of the eternal return, the *Übermensch*, and the will to power...The eternal return and the *Übermensch* are myths, deliberately created by Nietzsche as allegories for ideas which we cannot literally express”.⁸⁸

Here, it must be stressed that Kaufmann sees the figure of *Übermensch* as a spiritual idealization of the notion of self-overcoming not as a racial category just as in the case of National Socialism.

Richard Rorty’s Nietzsche

Lewis Call reads Nietzsche through Richard Rorty and Jürgen Habermas. On his account, “...these authors...approach Nietzsche’s writing with a pretheoretical commitment to the modern liberal state (and, implicitly, to the capitalist economic systems associated with such states)”.⁸⁹ He adds that, however, these authors “typically admit that Nietzsche’s work is philosophically important”, and, “they also recognize that his philosophy contains the foundations for a politics that is radically

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 57-58.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Dombowsky, p. 68-69.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Rathbone, p. 53.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 54.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Call, p. 53.

at odds with all existing modern political systems (including...modern liberal systems)".⁹⁰ So, what might be Rorty's solution to this theoretical stalemate? After showing this stalemate in the following terms: "[T]hey...face the daunting task of reconciling Nietzsche's philosophy with a political ideology to which they were irretrievably committed prior to reading Nietzsche", Call gives an answer to our question: "Richard Rorty attempts to accomplish this by bisecting Nietzsche into a 'public' and 'private' Nietzsche".⁹¹ Here, while 'private' Nietzsche refers to the act of self-creation on micro-level, 'public' Nietzsche refers to the politics on macro-level.

Conway critically explains Rorty's approach to Nietzsche in these words:

"Undeterred...by Nietzsche's scathing critique of liberal ideals, Rorty undertakes a selective appropriation of the basic elements of his political thinking. The key to reconciling Nietzsche's overtly illiberal thought with the guiding ideals of liberalism lies in restricting his moral perfectionism to the private sphere".⁹²

With regard to the Rorty's aim in this selective appropriation, Conway states that "Rorty enlists Nietzsche to galvanize the ethical life of contemporary liberal democratic societies. Enamored of Nietzsche's anti-essentialism and perspectivism but repulsed by his recidivistic appeal to the metaphysics of the will to power".⁹³ Moreover, Conway argues against Rorty's distinction between public and private like that:

"Nietzsche unequivocally insists that 'healthy' self-creation is never strictly private... 'Healthy' self-creation always involves a Dionysian element of excess or superfluity, which would obliterate Rorty's guiding distinction between public and private...".⁹⁴

Ansell-Pearson draws our attention to the theoretical connection between Rorty's private self and classical liberalism's imagination of self: "Rorty's privatization of the self falls back on the illusion of classical liberalism, which posited a pre-political self in full possession of human faculties, such as free will and conscience, independent of cultural processes of socialization".⁹⁵ To Ansell-Pearson, Rorty's selective appropriation of Nietzsche encompasses "...Nietzsche's critique of Western

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 53.

⁹² Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 123.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 124.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 171.

metaphysics that truth is a fiction and that modern human beings have to construct their lives without the support of either eternal truths or absolute values...”.⁹⁶

At that point, Call makes a connection between “most liberal critics of Nietzsche” and Rorty’s way of reading Nietzsche: “Rorty focuses only on the literal meaning of Nietzsche’s pronouncements, and fails to understand that these are performative, rather than prescriptive, statements. Nietzsche’s thinking does not imply that we should run through the streets engaging in unthinking cruelty”, And he completes his argument, “but it does imply that we should use the idea of cruelty to redesign ourselves and our institutions from the ground up...Rorty’s Nietzsche at best a partial Nietzsche, and it is a Nietzsche who has forgotten some of his most interesting ideas”.⁹⁷

Michel Foucault’s Nietzsche

Which aspects of Nietzsche do seem to be significant for Foucault? In fact, this question is another form of that question: Who is Foucault’s Nietzsche? “The significance of Nietzsche, according to Foucault’s original and radical interpretation of his work”, Ansell-Pearson holds, “is that he is the first to think about power outside of the confines of political theory”.⁹⁸ How can we understand, here, ‘outside of the confines of political theory’? Ansell-Pearson states that “...Nietzsche does not rely on traditional notions of sovereignty and law, which would mean that power is viewed as something essentially negative and prohibitive”.⁹⁹ He continues to argue:

“Nietzsche, Foucault contends, sees power everywhere, and views life itself in terms of a permanent contest between different forces of power. Power is not viewed in ‘positive’ terms ...as something which is not simply a reflection of human subjects who are oppressed by power, but which is productive of them”.¹⁰⁰

After stating that “Michel Foucault ...was probably the first post-war philosopher to take Nietzsche seriously as political thinker”, Robinson, too, articulates similar words regarding Nietzsche-Foucault relation: “Nietzsche enabled Foucault to think

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Call, p. 54.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 173.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 173.

about power and the individual in new ways, completely outside traditional liberal and Marxist political philosophies”.¹⁰¹

Wolin goes one step further and states Nietzsche’s virtue for Foucault in these terms:

“In Foucault’s eyes Nietzsche’s singular virtue was to have radicalized the Enlightenment notion of critique, to have succeeded in turning the acid bath of criticism against reason itself. Reason, argued Nietzsche, was constitutionally opposed to all metaphysical dogma and fixed ideas”.¹⁰²

Wolin completes his argument: “Ironically, though, one unexamined dogma yet remained: *reason itself*. Reason remained convinced of its own impartiality...It was Nietzsche, according to Foucault, who delivered the coup de grace to the naïve self-understanding of reason”.¹⁰³

What was the socio-political context which directed Foucault’s attention toward Nietzschean philosophy? Schrift puts it like this: “...the disillusionment of the French Left with the possibility of a successful revolution of the Left, a disillusionment punctuated by the events of May 68 and the retrenchments of power that followed”.¹⁰⁴ Schrift continues,

“...it is not Nietzsche’s politics but his recognition of the power-knowledge-truth nexus and his revolutionary philosophical position outside both Marxism and phenomenology – the two hegemonic orthodoxies of Foucault’s youth – that attracted Foucault”.¹⁰⁵

Correspondingly, Pecora says that “Foucault turns toward Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis of power in order to overcome the impasses – both theoretical and practical – encountered by dialectical thinking, whether Socratic or Hegelian or Marxian”.¹⁰⁶ After noting that there are different foci like “language/ discourse, truth, power, and the subject” in Foucault’s intellectual orientation, Schrift argues that:

“...Foucault himself linked each of these foci to Nietzsche...Foucault consistently inscribed his thinking in a space opened by Nietzsche’s philosophical labors, especially as they concerned the attention to language and

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 44-45.

¹⁰² Wolin, Richard. 2004. **The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism, from Nietzsche to Postmodernism**. United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, p. 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ Schrift, Alan D. 1995. **Nietzsche’s French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism**. New York and London: Routledge, p. 34-35.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁰⁶ Pecora, Vincent P. 1991. Nietzsche, Genealogy, Critical Theory. **New German Critique**, No. 53, Duke University Press, p. 108.

discourse, the will to truth and knowledge, the will to power, and the *Übermensch*".¹⁰⁷

Next to Foucault's appropriation of Nietzschean analysis of power, we should ask what kind of relation does exist between the notion of power and the notion of force in Nietzsche and Foucault. "One of the basic points of connection between Foucault and Nietzsche", Schrift holds,

"is their shared conception of force – they each view power...not as a force in relation to a being or an object (i.e., not as 'violence') but as 'the relation of force with other forces that it affects or that affect it'...because power acts not on things or persons but on other forces...".¹⁰⁸

That point is directly related to Ansell-Pearson's argument mentioned above to the extent that each writer (Schrift and Ansell-Pearson) accepts that power in Foucault's Nietzsche is not unidirectional, from top to down, and is not accumulated within certain boundaries such as in the shape of state, as previously formulated by Marxist theory.

What kind of conclusions could be made: Foucault appropriating Nietzschean legacy uncritically or Foucault adopting Nietzsche selectively? Thiele's answer is thus: "Foucault's writings exhibit more of a selective adaptation than an uncritical adoption of Nietzsche...Foucault politicized what Nietzsche had internalized: the will to struggle".¹⁰⁹ Thiele deals with Nietzschean roots of Foucault in a much more comprehensive way:

"All the trademarks of Foucault's methodology and concerns – the nature of genealogical study; the violence of (the origins of) truth; the cruelty, malice, and passion of the will to knowledge; and... self-sacrifice of the subject in the endless deployment of the will to truth – are documented as Nietzsche's own".¹¹⁰

Moreover, Thiele explains the relation between some of Foucault's work and Nietzschean task of creating the self aesthetically:

"...Foucault's writings concerning sexuality circumscribe the notion of creating the self as a work of art. This concern preoccupied Foucault in his latest works and was an endorsement of the Nietzschean project...Foucault had shifted

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Schrift, p. 36-37.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁹ Thiele, Leslie Paul. 1990. The Agony of Politics: The Nietzschean Roots of Foucault's Thought. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3. American Political Science Association, p. 923.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 915.

emphasis from genealogy to the equally Nietzschean endeavor of exploring the recreation of the self...”.¹¹¹

On the same issue, Conway notes that:

“Foucault’s writings from the ‘ethical’ period of his career... approximate most closely the experimental politics of resistance outlined by Nietzsche. Especially in his investigations into *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault seriously entertains Nietzsche’s thesis that (some) modern subjects may turn ascetic disciplines to their own advantage”.¹¹²

Pecora makes a comparison between Nietzschean genealogy and dialectical method from which Foucault during his intellectual life always prefers to escape. “The Nietzschean genealogist rescues history from Hegel’s surreptitious obsession with origins and essences”, Pecora holds,

“and provocatively reminds critique that there can be only beginnings, beginnings that must always take place within a context of ‘haphazard conflicts’. Where dialectical history sees progress or regression, fidelity or distortion, genealogy sees only practices and dramas...”.¹¹³

In fact, regarding the issue of making use of Nietzschean legacy tactically, Foucault is invariably clear. He repeatedly in different contexts states that to be loyal to Nietzschean legacy does not necessarily means that we should materialize every Nietzschean principle word by word. Rather, for Foucault, to be loyal also includes deformation and reformation of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

Sarah Kofman’s Nietzsche

In order to understand properly Sarah Kofman’s Nietzsche, we should take a quick look at her childhood story told by Faulkner. Kofman was a Jewish girl whose father was killed at Auschwitz while he was praying. While she and her mother were seeking refuge, they were accepted by a Christian woman

“whom she calls Mémé: a French term of endearment for one’s grandmother, but a word also curiously close to the Yiddish designation for ‘mother’... In fact, Mémé becomes for Kofman a fantasy mother, whom she positions as the ‘good mother’ at key points in her narrative... The actual mother is reduced in the daughter’s mind to a hysterical and frightening spectacle, speaking Yiddish rather than French – and thus threatening to expose them. Judaism itself is condemned along with the mother, Yiddish being the language of

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 915.

¹¹² Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 136.

¹¹³ Ibid., Pecora, p. 109.

Hysteria...Sarah has to separate herself from her own mother, even at the level of affect”.¹¹⁴

The reason behind this creation of distance is that “Kofman had to live on to survive the Nazi occupation of France”.¹¹⁵

So, what is this story’s relation to Kofman’s reading of Nietzsche? “...Kofman can be seen to manage anxiety about herself – particularly her Jewish identity – by means of her interpretation of Nietzsche”, Faulkner maintains,

“...because of his equivocal use of the trope of the Jew, Nietzsche became for Kofman figure through which she could negotiate her own conflicted identification with Judaism...Kofman performs a rescue and cleansing of herself along with Nietzsche...separating the positive comments...about the Jews from Nietzsche’s anti-Semitic...material...”.¹¹⁶

In fact, as far as we learn from Faulkner, Kofman is aware of this situation: “...in a 1986 interview, she insisted that her identification with the figures she reads was the sole constituent factor of her identity per se: that she has no ‘autobiography other than that which emerges from my bibliography’”.¹¹⁷

Is there a similar autobiographical basis between Nietzsche and Kofman, which gives rise to the latter’s identification with the former? For Faulkner, the answer is yes:

“Kofman elaborates Nietzsche’s identification with the philosophers in terms of Freud’s concept of... ‘the neurotic’s family romance’. The ‘family romance’ refers to a process whereby a child, grown dissatisfied with his parents’ imperfections, fantasizes for himself a better family so as to preserve his former idealization of the parents”.¹¹⁸

Faulkner continues with the argument: “[W]hat is interesting about Nietzsche’s fantasized genealogy is that, according to Kofman, he replaced the mother instead of the father, most usually the target of the child’s fantasized coup”.¹¹⁹ Faulkner explains the question of why father instead of mother on Nietzsche’s part and the meaning of his father and mother for Nietzsche in the following words:

“Perhaps this was due to his father’s premature death; simply, Nietzsche’s early idealization of his father was never subjected to revision or contradicted by an actual, living father...Nietzsche retained a highly idealized concept of his

¹¹⁴ Faulkner, Joanne. 2008. “Keeping It in the Family”: Sarah Kofman Reading Nietzsche as a Jewish Woman. *Hypatia*, Vol. 23. No.1, Wiley on behalf of Hypatia, Inc. p. 47.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

father...whereas his mother...'*bad-blooded*' *canaille*...whom he associated with the German rabble".¹²⁰

Is that idealization and denigration restricted to only his mother and father or is there something more for Nietzsche? On Faulkner's account,

"[A]t the same time as he honored his parental links to Polish and Prussian nobility, Kofman argues, Nietzsche further denigrated the German side of the family – the lineage he aligned with his mother and sister – suggesting that these connections represented precisely the parochial *canaille* that he felt had been infecting Germany".¹²¹

As a result, in Faulkner's words, "[I]t is therefore conceivable that Kofman has an interest in supporting Nietzsche's fantasy, and her own investment in his articulation of the bad-breasted mother".¹²²

Feminism's Nietzsche

What does Nietzsche mean, in general terms, to the feminism? Picart notes four groups, each of which has a different answer to this question:

"(1) those who believe Nietzsche's writings are essentially feminist; (2) those who believe Nietzsche's writings are at least potentially useful to feminism; (3) those who maintain that Nietzsche's writing are irredeemably misogynistic; and (4) those for whom a possible connection between Nietzsche and feminism is no even a mentionable...issue".¹²³

What is the reason behind all these different approaches? "The various camps that engage in debates on Nietzsche and his controversial relationship with the issue of the 'feminine'", Picart continues to argue,

"often trade quotations, with the profeminist (essentialist and tactical) Nietzsche camps usually citing from pre-Zarathustarn texts, such as *The Gay Science*, and the antifeminist Nietzsche camps citing post-Zarathustran texts, such as *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Ecce Homo*".¹²⁴

Clark makes an interesting argument regarding Nietzsche's seemingly misogynistic pronouncements: Nietzsche "is writing not about woman, but about 'woman as such', which he also calls 'the eternal feminine'. He is referring to the feminine essence, a social construction that individual woman need not exemplify...He is

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 45.

¹²² Ibid., p. 46.

¹²³ Picart, Caroline Joan S. 1999. **Resentment and the Feminine in Nietzsche's Politico-Aesthetics**. The Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

probably suggesting that our idea of the ‘eternal feminine’ also involves a contradiction...”.¹²⁵

Regarding the feminism’s appropriation of Nietzsche, Robinson states that “[T]he Overman and Overwoman must create themselves. So, this kind of anti-essentialism is one that many modern postfeminist philosophers and activists find useful”.¹²⁶ He continues: “Nietzsche may be useful to post-feminist philosophy in its attempts to re-evaluate traditional views on autonomy and individuality, and to seek a newer kind of feminist politics that affirms difference”.¹²⁷ Conway notes Nietzsche’s contribution to the feminist politics in these terms:

“[A]lthough feminist scholars have recently devoted a great deal of productive energy to the strategic (and selective) appropriation of Nietzsche’s political thinking his greatest contribution to the feminist politics remains both indirect and unintended”.¹²⁸

“His political legacy for contemporary feminism”, Conway continues to argue, “descends most vitally from his critique of objectivity, which some feminist scholars have recently adapted for incorporation into the epistemological frameworks of their own political projects”.¹²⁹ Conway elaborates on the issue of objectivity: Nietzsche

“...warns his readers to beware of the traditional interpretation of Objectivity as *disinterested contemplation*. The goal of disinterested contemplation presupposes ‘conceptual fictions’, and ‘contradictory concepts’, and it furthermore requires us to posit a disembodied, disinterested knowing subject...”.¹³⁰

In fact, the notion of objectivity Conway mentions is directly related to the Nietzschean notion of perspectivism discussed in the first chapter.

Ansell-Person’s argument is useful so long as to draw our attention not to Nietzsche’s overt pronouncements on woman, but to their style. “...the most fertile aspect of his writings for the formulation of a radical philosophy” he holds,

“lies, not in their overt pronouncements (on woman, for example), but rather in their ‘style’(s), in their attempt to communicate a philosophy of the body, in their disclosure of the metaphoricity of philosophical discourse, and in the

¹²⁵ Ibid., Clark, p. 145-146.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Robinson, p. 49.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 125.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 125.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 126.

exemplary way in which they are seen to deconstruct the logocentric bias of western thought and reason”.¹³¹

In that regard, Faulkner mentions Luce Irigaray’s appropriation of Nietzschean style: “[A]s with Nietzsche’s own style, Irigaray’s writing is poetic, and sometimes obscure compared to most philosophical writing...Irigaray writes elliptically, communicating at an emotional and sensual level by sharing the ‘tonality’ of her relation to Nietzsche”.¹³² Ansell-Pearson also refers to feminist appropriation of Nietzschean critique of cartesian subject:

“[N]ietzsche’s thinking contains an emphasis on ambiguity, on plural identity, on the affirmation of the constructed self in terms of an artistic task in which one freely gives ‘style’ to one’s character, all of which can be useful for articulating a kind of feminist mode of thought which seeks to subvert an essentializing of human identity, whether female or male...”.¹³³

We shall again touch upon the issue of Nietzschean ambiguity in Chapter 3. What is common in here and in the next chapter is that Nietzschean ambiguity paves the way for tactical appropriation by sometimes even diametrically opposed political standpoints.

¹³¹ Ibid., Keith Ansell-Pearson, 1993, ‘Nietzsche, woman and political theory’, in **Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory**, p. 28-29.

¹³² Ibid, Joanne Faulkner, 2011, ‘Irigaray’s Nietzsche’ in **Interpreting Nietzsche: Reception and Influence**, p. 180-181.

¹³³ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 31.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICIZATION OF NIETZSCHE AND THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF HIS LEGACY

In this chapter, we shall touch upon three points. First, we shall examine the presumed relation between Nazis and Nietzsche's philosophy. Here, the main concern is to identify the nature of relation between them. In that regard, we shall look at the dynamics and processes behind Nazi-Nietzschean philosophy identification. Nazis' philosopher Alfred Baeumler, Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth and Nietzsche's own pronouncements on war, domination and will to power, all of which shall be the main concerns of this first point. Second, we shall try to understand whether Nietzsche is anti-Semite. Here, we shall analyze Nietzsche's position toward the Jewish question. This is important to situate Nietzsche's position toward Nazism as an anti-Semitic movement.

The Case of National Socialism

Lang asks and answers:

“[W]as Nietzsche a fascist or an advocate for fascism?... No...Has he been interpreted as a fascist?... Yes – by both fascists and anti-fascists (but not by all of either group; some of the dissenters – again on both sides – considers him an antifascist, others as either so politically retrograde or advanced as to be neither pro- nor anti-”¹³⁴

In that regard, Bergoffen asks the Derridean question and interprets it:

“Derrida asks: What Makes the Nazi perversion and simplification of Nietzsche possible? The question is powerful. It identifies Nazism as a misinterpretation of Nietzsche, but it does not wholly disengage Nietzsche

¹³⁴ Lang, Berel. 2002. Misinterpretation as the Author's Responsibility (Nietzsche's Fascism, for instance). In Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich (Eds.), **Nietzsche Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy**, Princeton University Press, p. 48.

from the Nazi error/era. Something in Nietzsche makes this perversion and simplification possible”.¹³⁵

Sluga also asks the same question in different terms and directs our attention to the way of reading of Nietzsche: “[W]as he not in some ways a forerunner of German National Socialism? That impression is due...to a shortsighted, distorted reading of his words”.¹³⁶

After quoting Nietzsche’s famous statement about ‘great politics’, Smith relates Nietzschean notion of will to power and great politics to fascism:

“‘[T]he time for petty politics is over: the very next century will bring the fight for the dominion of the earth – the compulsion to large-scale politics.’ It is difficult not to read this passage as a terrifying prefiguration of the next century’s ‘grand politics’ of German fascism conducted in a large measure in the name of the will to power”.¹³⁷

Tolle articulates some similarities between fascism and Nietzsche: “Nietzsche and fascism share a number of views including: the typical individual has no inherent worth; the vast majority can find meaning and justification only by dedicating themselves to the promotion of a higher sovereign species”.¹³⁸ Stone also mentions similarities while criticizing Oscar Levy’s attempt to denazify Nietzsche:

“[F]or all the attempts to prove that the fascists, especially the Nazis, distorted Nietzsche, on a simplistic level the affiliations between Nietzsche and fascism are obvious and were behind Levy’s initial enthusiasm: the language of strength, vitality and scorn for the weak, the idea of the Superman and the fascist ‘new man’, and race-regeneration”.¹³⁹

Regarding the notion of will to power, Brinton argues that:

“...most of Nietzsche’s grand abstract terms, though they can be given a variety of interpretations, contain overtones, implications, admirably suited to Nazi uses. The famous phrase ‘Will to Power’ suggests ruthlessness, aggression, a policy of expansion perfectly illustrated since Hitler’s accession to power”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Ibid., Bergoffen, p. 49.

¹³⁶ Sluga, Hans. 2015. “The Time Is Coming When One Will Have to Relearn about Politics”. In Julian Young (Ed.), **Individual and Community in Nietzsche’s Philosophy**, Cambridge University Press, p. 31.

¹³⁷ Smith, John H. 1998. Nietzsche’s “Will to Power”: Politics Beyond (Hegelian) Recognition. **New German Critique**, No.73, Special Issue on Heiner Muller, Duke University Press, p. 154.

¹³⁸ Tolle, Gordon J. 1990. Political Consequences of Nietzsche’s Philosophy. **The review of Politics**, Vol. 52, No.4, Cambridge University Press for the University of Notre du lac on behalf of Review of Politics, p. 638.

¹³⁹ Stone, Dan. 2002. **Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain**. Liverpool University Press, p. 25.

¹⁴⁰ Brinton, Crane. 1940. The National Socialist’s Use of Nietzsche. **Journal of the History of Ideas**, Vol. 1, No. 2, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 138.

“The concept of a new race of Supermen”, Brinton continues to argue,

“though Nietzsche himself left it as obscure in form and detail as are most such eschatological concepts of recent invention, has proved very flattering to an aspiring Nazi élite, who have considered that they were at least making possible the development of a new race of men”.¹⁴¹

Accordingly, with regard to the convergent points between Nazis and Nietzsche, Ascheim states that “...in its overall bioeugenic political and medical vision, its programmatic obsession with degeneration and regeneration, whether in parodistic form or not, there are clear informing parallels with key Nietzschean categories and goals”.¹⁴² He continues to argue: “[T]he Nazi bio-political understanding of, and solution to ‘degeneration’...was in multilayered ways explicitly Nietzsche-inspired”.¹⁴³ He also adds that “[W]ith all its affinities to an older conservatism, it was the radically experimental, morality-challenging, tradition-shattering Nietzschean sensibility that made the vast transformative scale of the Nazi project thinkable”.¹⁴⁴ In that context, Wolin argues that “...the National Socialists viewed the doctrine of ‘total war’ and the unprecedented genocide and carnage it had unleashed in quintessentially Nietzschean terms: as... ‘twilight of the idols’, a macabre aesthetic spectacle of the first order”.¹⁴⁵ He continues to argue:

“[D]ocumentary evidence corroborates the extent to which the SS (Schutz Staffel) adopted as its credo – and thereby found ideological inspiration to carry out the ‘Final Solution’ – Nietzsche’s admonitions to ‘live dangerously’ and to practice ‘self-overcoming’”.¹⁴⁶

Wolin also explains Nietzsche’s difference from other German intellectuals with regard to his identification with Nazis:

“[A]lthough the Nazis also tried to render German poets such as Goethe and Schiller serviceable for their cause, their attachment to the traditional ideals of European humanism represented a formidable hurdle. In Nietzsche’s case, however, no such obstacles existed”.¹⁴⁷

Brinton articulates his views in different terms:

“[T]here is much in Nietzsche which is directly useful to the Nazis and can therefore be taken over intact as Nietzsche wrote it. Notably, there are

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁴² Ibid., Ascheim, p. 13.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Wolin, p. 57.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

countless passages condemning nineteenth century bourgeois civilization as decadent, stuffy, soft, unworthy of the hard Nordic inheritance of Germans”.¹⁴⁸

“Nietzsche’s contempt for the nineteenth century”, Brinton continues to argue, “and all its works, his attacks on Christianity, on humanitarian movement, on parliamentary government, that ‘destructive’ part of his writings which in nerve and clarity is the best part – all this is just what he convinced Nazi wants to hear”.¹⁴⁹ Holub gives some numerical data illustrating the relationship between Nazis and Nietzsche’s works:

“[H]is *Zarathustra*, which had sold so poorly in its first editions, became requisite reading for German soldiers. It has been reported that 150,000 copies of a durable war-time edition were distributed to the troops, and 40,000 volumes were sold in 1917 alone”.¹⁵⁰

Ansell-Pearson refers to Nietzsche’s fame during the First World War as a factor contributing to Nietzsche’s appropriation by the Nazis:

“[I]t was the popularity of Nietzsche’s writings gained in Germany during the First World War which made it possible for the Nazis to exploit him as an ideological ally in the inter-war period (German soldiers went to the front, it is reported, with the Bible in one trench-coat pocket and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the other)”.¹⁵¹

In fact, according to Brinton, there are numerous passages which Nazis cannot want to hear in Nietzschean corpus, as well:

“[T]he Germans are muddle-headed, soft-hearted metaphysicians, incurable sentimentalists, vague and wordy romanticists with no feeling for style, hopelessly enmeshed in Christian and Protestant soul-searchings, totally lacking in esprit, in true gaiety”.¹⁵²

After noting the relation between Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and Nietzschean philosophy, Conway gives us some clues concerning another factor behind Nazi-Nietzsche identification: “Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* is littered with ersatz Nietzscheanisms, which Nazi ideologues dutifully cobbled together to serve as the philosophical platform for their insane, misanthropic vision of political dystopia”.¹⁵³ He continues to argue:

“Nietzsche’s defenders rightly point out that these anti-Semitic, progenocidal ‘teachings’ were mercilessly wrenched from their subtle philosophical

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Brinton, p. 134.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 134.

¹⁵⁰ Holub, Robert C. 2016. **Nietzsche’s Jewish Problem: Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism**. Princeton University Press, p.10.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 29.

¹⁵² Ibid., Brinton, p. 141.

¹⁵³ Ibid., Conway, 1997, p. 116.

contexts, that he was heartlessly betrayed to the National Socialists by his self-appointed executrix, the opportunistic Elisabeth”.¹⁵⁴

With regard to the Nietzsche’s sister’s effect on Nazi-Nietzsche identification, Strehle states that:

“... the basic theme and texture that connect Nietzsche with the Geist of Nazism...are embodied in his overall emphasis upon the will to power. It is no surprise that Elisabeth...and many of the Nazis peddled the posthumous book...*Will to Power*, as Nietzsche’s crowning systematic representation of his ideas”.¹⁵⁵

Santaniello elaborates on the same issue:

“...Elisabeth, from 1892 onward, heavily censored and controlled Nietzsche’s published works...she rushed to compile and promote a collection of notes entitled *The Will to Power*...as Nietzsche’s last great ‘synthesizing’ work...she falsified the story of the Wagner/Nietzsche break...”.¹⁵⁶

He continues to argue: “...she forged, altered or destroyed Nietzsche’s documents to cover up his negative remarks concerning Wagner, herself, Christianity and anti-Semitism”.¹⁵⁷ Correspondingly, Wolin states that:

“...Hitler paid a ceremonial visit to the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar. There to receive Hitler was the administrator of the estate...Elisabeth, who had systematically altered its contents, suppressing documents and forging others, to make Nietzsche out to be the German nationalist and anti-Semite he was not”.¹⁵⁸

Ansell-Pearson explain the probable reason behind Elisabeth’s attitude:

“[S]everal times she invited Hitler, and on one occasion presented him with Nietzsche’s walking stick (for what purpose remains unclear). It seems to have been her hope that by promoting Nietzsche in this way she would increase her own importance and fame”.¹⁵⁹

On the other hand, Holub shows us a different picture regarding accusations against Elisabeth: “[T]he letters she doctored or forged play no role in the arguments of National Socialist interpretations, which depend entirely on either published and

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁵⁵ Strehle, Stephen. 2011. The Nazis and the German Metaphysical Tradition of Voluntarism. **The Review of Metaphysics**, Vol. 65, No. 1, Philosophy Education Society Inc. p. 123.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Weaver Santaniello, 1997, ‘A Post-Holocaust Re-examination of Nietzsche and the Jews’ in **Nietzsche and Jewish Culture**, p. 23.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Wolin, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 30.

authorized writings or texts that Elisabeth did not manipulate”.¹⁶⁰ He continues to argue:

“[A] careful examination of Elisabeth’s actions indicates that her motivation in doctoring the correspondence was primarily personal, not ideological; quite simply stated, she falsified letters to make it appear that she was as close to her brother in the 1880s as she was during the previous decade...”.¹⁶¹

Regarding Elisabeth’s anti-Semitic proclivities, Holub argues that:

“...Elisabeth had disavowed her former convictions long before she began dealing seriously with her brother’s writings and the Achieves. In her Nietzsche biography she claims that she temporarily adopted anti-Semitic positions out of respect for her husband, while he was away in South America and needed someone to defend him in Germany”.¹⁶²

Holub concludes his remarks with these words: “[A]lthough Elisabeth played no role in making her brother a racist and anti-Semite, she was nonetheless extremely important in removing any stigma of anti-Jewishness from him after the Second World War”.¹⁶³

Let us look at another figure, one of the Nazi philosophers Alfred Baeumler, who contributed to the issue of Nazi-Nietzsche identification. “His fundamental academic credential”, Strehle argues,

“was an apologetic work...which promoted Nietzsche as a central figure in developing an early form of the new Nazi ideology. Official organs of the Nazi party portrayed Nietzsche as a significant forerunner of their movement before, but now they possessed the political power to propagate their Nietzschean philosophy and Baeumler was just their man to do it”.¹⁶⁴

In accordance with that argument, Brinton holds that,

“Baeumler’s method is best shown by specific examples. He does proceed on the blanket assumption... that Nietzsche’s work is perfectly consistent with the party doctrine we have either misinterpreted the Master, or misunderstood his immediate purpose in the conflict he waged single-handed against an age steeped in liberal and democratic error”.¹⁶⁵

How was it that Baeumler interpreted Nietzsche’s scornful statements on the state, in accordance with the Nazi’s state fetishism? “Baeumler feels that”, Brinton continues to argue,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Holub, p. 19.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.29.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Strehle, p. 130.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., Brinton, p. 147.

“he has to show that Nietzsche under proper conditions would have identified himself as whole-heartedly with the state ... When Nietzsche says he scorns the state, Baeumler glosses, he is thinking of the second Reich. The second Reich was a state based on the defeat and subordination of the German people by Roman and Christian elements”.¹⁶⁶

Lang mentions Baeumler’s another interpretative act concerning the notion of will to power:

“...Baeumler openly described the deliberate effort required to force the interpretation of Nietzsche through this very transposition from the will to power in the individual to the authority of power on behalf of the state (That transposition, Baeumler ingenuously notes, was ‘difficult but necessary’).¹⁶⁷

“The outcome of this process”, Lang continues, “could not, in any event, be in doubt: the Nietzsche of fascism would have to accord significant authority to the state and have it appeared consistent with whatever else he advocated. But, quite simply, this consistency is absent in Nietzsche himself”.¹⁶⁸ After stating that “Baeumler...was not...merely an agent of the Nazis. He was a real, convinced and committed Nazi”, Fischer argues that:

“...posthumously published notes have been used in Baeumler’s interpretation. Baeumler’s special claim, that the real Nietzsche can be found above all in his *Nachlass*, may be controversial but is certainly not absurd. In any case, the real Nietzsche is also in the *Nachlass*, properly or improperly edited”.¹⁶⁹

It must be noted that that Elisabeth posthumously published Nietzsche’s some notes paved the way for Nazi ideologues’ main aspect of appropriation Nietzsche, reminds us once again Elisabeth’s role in Nazi-Nietzsche identification.

Regarding Hitler’s relation to Nietzsche’s philosophy, Lang states that:

“[T]o be sure, there is no positive evidence that Hitler himself ever read a word of Nietzsche; if he did read him, it was certainly not extensively. (When Hitler summons the authority of thinkers...which he does not do often, it is Schopenhauer whom he occasionally mentions...).¹⁷⁰

On the other hand, Lang continues to argue: “[I]t is clear, however, that other figures committed to National Socialism did read Nietzsche as a herald of Nazi ideology, thus bringing Hitler to Nietzsche if not quite the other way round...”.¹⁷¹ Holub also

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 147.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., Lang, p. 59.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, Kurt Rudolf Fischer, ‘A Godfather Too: Nazism as a Nietzschean “Experiment”’, in **Nietzsche Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy**, p. 293.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Lang, p. 52.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 52.

puts forward the same argument in similar terms: "...although we have no evidence that Adolf Hitler ever read a line of Nietzsche's philosophy, he certainly did not mind being associated with Nietzsche's sister and with the Nietzsche Archives in Weimar".¹⁷² Correspondingly, Brinton articulates that:

"...the Führer himself has publicly gone on record as having learned something from Nietzsche. Hitler does not specifically mention Nietzsche among the authors he read in his idle Vienna days, but it seems likely that many of Nietzsche's notions filtered down to him at second hand even before he went actively into politics".¹⁷³

On contrary to those arguing that Nazis misunderstood Nietzsche, Santaniello puts forward a contentious argument:

"...the Nazis understood Nietzsche all too well and that is precisely why they attempted to destroy him – and sever a vital part of Jewish history. The Nazis were not attracted to Nietzsche, they were repulsed and enraged by him precisely because he upheld the Jews and dared to defy many precursors of the Third Reich...".¹⁷⁴

"The Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche", he continues to argue,

"...was not solely rooted in revenge, it was also a means of silencing him, a technique that began with Elisabeth...in Nietzsche's time, Wagnerites had strong intentions to annihilate all or part of European Jewry – and to cover their traces in the process – Nietzsche's writings...would be an obstacle".¹⁷⁵

To sum up, Nietzsche has so many divergent points with Nazis along with convergent ones. In that respect, however we cannot claim that Nietzsche is forerunner of Nazism in essence, we can suggest the idea that Nietzschean works have an obvious ambiguity which provides useful philosophical conceptualizations for Nazis. So, we examined three main factors behind Nazism-Nietzschean philosophy identification: Alfred Baeumler's efforts to engage Nietzsche in Nazism, Elisabeth's efforts to publish Nietzsche's notebooks and as mentioned Nietzsche's own ambiguous style.

Jewish Question: An Anti-Semitic Nietzsche?

In regard to the importance of anti-Semitism within the whole economy of Nazi-Nietzsche identification, Weaver goes so far as to claim that "[T]he entire Nazi-

¹⁷² Ibid., Holub, p. 10.

¹⁷³ Ibid., Brinton, p. 133.

¹⁷⁴ Santaniello, Weaver. 1994. **Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth**. State University of New York, p. 150.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

Nietzsche myth was built on the premise of his anti-Semitism”.¹⁷⁶ Let us examine this so-called myth’s multi-dimensional facets.

Regarding Nietzschean texts’ ambiguity Aschheim holds that:

“[T]here are clearly sufficient allusions, hints and themes to satisfy virtually all comers. Jew and anti-Semites alike were aware that both could find Nietzsche’s work useful (and spent much of their time in casuistically explaining away those passages that were not compatible with their own particular outlook)”.¹⁷⁷

Holub elaborates on the socio-political context in which Nietzsche pronounces ambivalent pronouncements concerning the Jewish question. “As a boy growing up in Naumburg”, Holub argues,

“it is not unlikely that he imbibed a cultural anti-Jewish feeling that thrived in this narrow minded, petty-bourgeois atmosphere. His studies in Bonn and Leipzig brought an increase neither in tolerance nor in openness. Although he was not attracted to rabid racists, from his correspondence we can detect in his friends a commonplace anti-Jewish feeling...”.¹⁷⁸

He also adds Wagnerian context as another factor: “[T]hat the young Nietzsche, who consider himself to be in the vanguard of the Wagnerian cultural mission in the late 1860s and early 1870s, would not have been exposed to anti-Jewish convictions is quite unlikely”.¹⁷⁹

With regard to Nietzsche’s ambivalent stance Holub notes:

“Nietzsche held different and sometimes inconsistent views about Jews he met socially or casually, about anti-Semitism as apolitical movement, about Jews as a cultural and religious group in nineteenth century German and European society, and about the ancient Jews as the founders of a religious tradition”.¹⁸⁰

“If we consider that”, Holub continues to argue,

“Nietzsche’s publisher Ernst Schmeitzner and his brother-in-law Bernard Förster were two of the central figures in the anti-Semitic movement of the 1880s, then we can understand that Nietzsche, throughout his life, could hardly have avoided confronting opinions on the Jews, Judaism, and anti-Semitism”.¹⁸¹

With regard to the importance of the issue of anti-Semitism for Nietzsche, Santaniello notes that:

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., Aschheim, p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ Holub, Robert C. 1995. Nietzsche and the Jewish Question. *New German Critique*, No. 66, Special Issue on the Nineteenth Century, Duke University Press, p. 98.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 99.

“...antisemitism played such a major role in Nietzsche’s break with Wagner, his sister, and even his publisher...he urged those closest to him to renounce antisemitism and suffered personal sacrifice for doing so...he raved against anti-Semites during the hours of his transition to insanity...”.¹⁸²

Holub mentions Nietzsche’s anti-Jewish bias in these terms:

“Nietzsche’s relative freedom from anti-Jewish bias does not mean that he did not partake in the general atmosphere of anti-Jewish feeling of his time. Throughout his correspondence we repeatedly encounter unflattering references to Jews, in particular in his letters to his family”.¹⁸³

Holub goes into detail about the question of what kind of associations regarding Jews Nietzsche did have in mind in his early times: “[I]n his early years, Jews have a traditional field of association in Nietzsche’s mind: they are identified with merchants and money, with unsavory food, ugliness, and occasionally cleverness”.¹⁸⁴

Correspondingly, Brinton mentions the figure of Jews in Nietzschean corpus in similar terms:

“...the Jews are intellectuals with grievance, hence destroyers of what makes for stability in society; they run the press and the stock-exchange, to the disadvantage of the slower-witted...they are parasites, decadents; they are responsible for three great evils of modern civilization – Christianity, Democracy, Marxism”.¹⁸⁵

On the other hand, Holub notes that:

“[I]n general...his comments on Jews become much more positive after he has escaped the orbit of Wagner’s circle. As the years go by he seems to take pleasure in praising the Jews in letters to his sister, who had succumbed entirely to anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic thought”.¹⁸⁶

Aschheim, however, argues that “[H]is philo-Semitic comments were simply an attention-getting device – playing the Jews against the Germans was part of his strategy to get the Germans to listen to him!”.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, Holub warns us:

“[W]e should... not confuse Nietzsche’s anti-anti-Semitic pronouncements and the decline in a prejudicial attitude toward the Jews in private remarks with anything resembling liberal attitudes, toleration of differences, or compassion for the persecuted”.¹⁸⁸

“...Nietzsche opposed anti-Semitism”, he maintains,

¹⁸² Ibid., Santaniello, 1994, p. 138.

¹⁸³ Ibid., Holub, 1995, p. 100.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 100-101.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., Brinton, p. 137.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., Holub, 1995, p. 103.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Aschheim, p. 7.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Holub, 1995, p. 111.

“not out of a belief in tolerance or out of a particular respect for the Jews, the Jewish religion, or Jewish culture, but because he saw this movement as a further manifestation of an unhealthy moralism...Nietzsche’s response to and rejection of anti-Semitism...is part and parcels of his assault on Christian ethics, narrow-minded nationalism, and redemptive socialism”.¹⁸⁹

Santaniello makes a difference between Nietzsche’s attitude toward modern Jews and ancient Judaism:

“...although Nietzsche is not wholly uncritical of contemporary Jewry, he consistently displays an enthusiastic and positive attitude toward modern Jews; his views toward ancient Judaism are both positive and negative; the features of condemnments are almost always connected to his criticisms of Christianity”.¹⁹⁰

What was the figure of Nietzsche for the anti-Semitic movement of his time like? Holub notes that “...the anti-Semitic movement of his time had viewed him as an unsympathetic rival for attention, decrying him as a philo-Semite who betrayed the nationalist cause...”.¹⁹¹ In that context, Ansell-Pearson refers to the paradoxical situation:

“[I]t is somewhat paradoxical that a writer who promoted the cause of Europe as opposed to that of Germany, who lambasted all forms of racism in politics, especially anti-Semitism, should be perceived so widely as an ideological founder of Nazism”.¹⁹²

All in all, though Nietzsche had some stereotypical pronouncements regarding Jews and he grew up in an anti-Semitic environment, he did never support any kind of anti-Semitic movement just because he saw this kind of movements as a sign of unhealthy and degenerative forces. Moreover, however Nazis tried to manipulate Nietzschean legacy in accordance with their ideology’s cornerstones as in the case of anti-Semitism, Nietzsche had never been seen as an anti-Semitic in his period. Contrarily, he had been labelled as a philo-Semite by the anti-Semitic movement of his time.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., Santaniello, 1997, p. 38.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Holub, 2016, p. 11.

¹⁹² Ibid., Ansell-Pearson, p. 28.

CONCLUSION

Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in works on Nietzsche's political dimension and his influence on so many different philosophical currents such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, feminism, phenomenology and existentialism. Most of them focus on whether Nietzsche is a political philosopher or an antipolitical philosopher of values and culture.

It is a fact that Nietzsche from time to time alternately affiliates himself with positions such as 'unpolitical', 'indifferent toward politics' and most famously as the 'last antipolitical German'. Yet, there is a common sense among interpreters that being so called 'antipolitical' does not amount to the wholesale dismissal of the political sphere. Instead, they argue, by that affiliation we should see a rejection of 'petty' party politics along with national fanaticism. In other words, Nietzsche gives priority to the cultural flourishing over modern secular state's ideals, since he sees an antagonistic relation between culture and the state. To Nietzsche, state's main goal is to maintain its own survival to the detriment of individuals who endeavour to transfigure their present existence. Here, it must be conceded that the aim of Nietzsche is not total destruction of the state as a political unity. Contrarily, the Nietzschean ideal of creating cultural greatness ontologically necessitates the existence of a stable political authority. He is just unwilling to give ideological power encroaching on individual Dionysian creativity to the state. Very briefly, he as a defender and promoter of culture is primarily against the politicization of culture and is against his period's political atmosphere, not against the sphere of politics altogether.

Apart from the discussion of whether Nietzsche is antipolitical or not, there are some Nietzschean concepts with predominantly political implications such as will to power, aristocratism and perspectivism. For Nietzsche, every living organism has an inner irresistible tendency to become more: it has to expand and grow instead of just preserving itself. Can we conclude a metaphysical justification for violence from these sentences? In fact, some authors claim that yes, we can, just as in the case of

National Socialism. However, some claim that we should read the notion of will to power not as a Hobbesian will to dominate but as a principle of differentiation among human beings or sublimated self-transfiguration.

Nietzsche embraces enthusiastically the title 'aristocratic radicalism' used for him by George Brandes. For the production of superior individuals, Nietzsche believes in the necessity of an aristocratic society in which hierarchical order of rank and order of castes efficiently work. He finds an approximation of his ideal aristocratic structure in the Hindu Laws of Manu.

For Nietzsche, there is not an absolute truth stemming from an unquestionable authority. He considers the production of knowledge as a function of affective investment in the world. Hence, the more we subject the external reality to our instinctual perspective, the more we shall be 'objective'. As can be seen, Nietzsche radically transforms traditional notion of objectivity resting upon premises of cartesian subject and of Kantian pure reason.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Nietzsche is at least an advocate of war in metaphorical sense. Since consensus and war are mutually exclusive processes, he does not fit easily into the Heywood's category of politics as compromise and consensus. Also, we cannot subject him to the category of politics as art of government, for he is not a politician. However, he does fit into that category to the extent that his writings are related to 'what concerns the state' as discussed above. Because of the fact that the nature of his writings has direct relevance to the 'public life' and/or 'public affairs' and that his notion of will to power does perfectly match with the politics as power, he can be put into the category of politics as public affairs and politics as power.

In chapter 2, we have looked at Nietzsche through the perspectives of Walter Kaufmann, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, Sarah Kofman and Feminism in general. By doing so, we have concluded that no one can claim the existence of a clear-cut Nietzschean legacy; Nietzschean corpus is open to plural and equally legitimate readings, none of which is superior to one another. Hence, it has helped us to perceive National Socialism as only one interpretation among so many others. We have also examined Nietzsche's different political influences in the case of Kaufmann, Rorty, Foucault, Kofman and Feminism. For example, while we have seen a liberal, postmodern Nietzsche in the case of Rorty, we have seen Nietzsche as

an object of psychoanalysis in the case of Kofman. As for Kaufmann, we have seen Nietzsche as an object of denazification. When it comes to Foucault, we have seen Nietzsche as a master and philosopher of power-knowledge-truth nexus. And, although Nietzsche has so many quasi-misogynistic statements, we see Feminism's tactical appropriation of Nietzsche's legacy as in the case of the notion of perspectivism.

In chapter 3, we have concluded that there is a common sense that Nietzsche is not fascist in essence. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that his works contain so many aspects in itself, that provided useful theoretical tools for Nazis. Although there are some convergent points between Nazis and Nietzschean philosophy as in the case of their emphasis on will to power, racial regeneration and contempt for the weak, there is also wide range of divergent points. For example, Nietzsche is not an advocate for nationalism and militarism. And he prefers individual enhancement to the flourishing of the state. Three factors can be counted for the Nazi-Nietzsche identification. First, Nietzsche's own ambiguity throughout his works gives rise to any tactical appropriation. Second, Elisabeth's intimate relations with Nazis and her attempt to publish Nietzsche's notes creates an image of Nazi-Nietzsche nexus. Third, Alfred Baeumler intentionally subjects Nietzschean philosophy to Nazis' ideological cornerstones. As can be concluded, it is a bidirectional relation: on the one hand, Nazis politicized Nietzsche (Nietzsche here is somewhat a passive object), on the other hand, Nietzsche's ambiguous dimensions and his attractive pronouncements paved the way for this outcome (he is now in a much more dominant position). As for the issue of anti-Semitism, though Nietzsche pronounces ambiguous words regarding Jews and grew up in an anti-Semitic milieu, it is clear that he is always against anti-Semitism as a political movement.

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