DECLARATION

I, Duane Danny-Coe Booysen, 206012977, hereby declare that the *Psychobiography of Friedrich Nietzsche* dissertation for Masters of Arts (Psychology: Research) is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

Duane Danny-Coe Booysen

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Introduction  
1.1 General Orientation to the Research Study  
1.2 Context of Research  
1.3 Aim of Research Study  
1.4 Overview of Psychobiography  
1.5 Carl Rogers’ Theory of the Fully Functioning Person  
1.6 Research Subject – Friedrich Nietzsche  
1.7 Data Collection  
1.8 Structural Overview of the Dissertation  
1.9 Conclusion  

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOBIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Preview</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Qualitative Research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Qualitative Research Paradigms</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 The Interpretive Paradigm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 The Phenomenological Paradigm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Psychobiographical Research</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Definition and description of psychobiography</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Genealogy of Psychobiography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Critique Launched Against Psychobiography</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 The Contribution of Psychobiography</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 The extraordinary and enigmatic individual</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 The context is critical</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3 Subjective reality</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.4 Testing and refining a theoretical framework</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 The Development of Psychobiography</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL OVERVIEW: CARL ROGERS’ FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Preview</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Overview of Humanistic Psychology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The Person behind the Theory – Carl Rogers in Context</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Central Concepts of Rogers’ Theory of Personality</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Genuineness</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Acceptance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Empathy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Theory of the Fully Functioning Person</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Actualising tendency</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 An Increasing openness to experience</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3 Increasing existential living</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.4 An increasing trust in one’s organism</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.5 Creativity as a characteristic of the fully functioning person</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.6 Basic trustworthiness of human nature</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Criticism of Carl Rogers’ Theory</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Current Status of Carl Rogers’ Theory</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Preview</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Research Method</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Research Subject</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Preliminary Methodological Considerations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Trustworthiness in psychobiography</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.1 Credibility</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.2 Dependability</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.3 Transferability</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1.4 Conformability</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Reductionism</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 Researcher bias</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4 Cross-cultural influences</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5 Analysing a finished life</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.6 Overgeneralization</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Choosing a Theory</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Data Collection</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Data Analysis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Conclusion</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE
THE LIFE OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Chapter Preview 36
5.1 The Childhood Years 36
5.2 The School Boy 38
5.3 The Student 41
5.4 War, Politics and Military Service 44
5.5 The Reluctant Professor 45
5.6 The Wanderer 49
5.7 The Lou Salome Affair 51
5.8 The Final Years, Collapse and Death 52
5.7 Conclusion 53

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Chapter Preview 54
6.1 An Increasing Openness to Experience 54
6.2 Increasing Existential Living 57
6.3 Creativity as a Characteristic of the Fully Functioning Person 62
6.4 Basic Trustworthiness of Human Nature 63
6.5 Actualising Tendency 64
6.6 Conclusion 67

CHAPTER SEVEN
RESEARCH SUMMARY, CHALLENGES, VALUE, RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Chapter Preview 68
7.1 Research Summary 68
7.2 Challenges of the Study 71
7.3 Value of the Study 71
7.4 Recommendations for Future Research 72
7.5 Research Reflection 72
7.6 Conclusion 73

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Data Collection and Analysis Grid
Abstract

The primary aim of this psychobiography was to examine Friedrich Nietzsche’s life by utilizing Carl Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) has become an iconic figure in German philosophy and literature. Nietzsche’s criticism of western morality and culture led him to believe that humankind was not living to its highest potential and consequently Nietzsche sought after a life of self-becoming. Nietzsche’s philosophy has influenced various people such as Viktor Frankl, DH Lawrence, Michel Foucault and NP van Wyk Louw. Nietzsche was chosen as the research subject because of personal interest, his prominence as a philosopher, and because of his ambition to live a meaningful life.

Psychobiographical research with the use of psychological theory allows for the exploration and description of the life of an individual. This significant area of research involving the application of psychological theory has in previous decades, however, been under-utilized, particularly in South Africa. But more recently, has it been receiving increasing support by researchers both internationally and in South Africa.

Data collected on Friedrich Nietzsche’s life were drawn from several primary and secondary sources. A data collection and analysis grid was developed in order to collect data systematically, and to analyse the data according to the qualities of Carl Rogers’ theory.

The study adds to the body of psychobiographical research. It also provides an empirical exploration of Carl Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person. As the scope of the study was that of a master’s dissertation, future research, utilising semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable relatives, academics, psychologists, biographers, philosophers and historians on Nietzsche’s life, could extend this line of research.

In conclusion, the current psychobiography suggests that Nietzsche lived a life filled with several personal crises. Despite these challenges, Nietzsche directed himself towards living as a fully functioning person. Nietzsche’s impetus towards self-becoming is also evident within his philosophical writings. Nietzsche was an extraordinary individual whose life, as described in the current psychobiography, corresponds closely to Rogers’ (1961) theory of a fully functioning person.

Key words: Carl Rogers, Friedrich Nietzsche, fully functioning person, psychobiography
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 General Orientation to the Research Study

This chapter provides the reader with a general overview of the context of the research and the research aim. It then orientates the reader to the theoretical framework utilised. In the following section the research subject, Friedrich Nietzsche, is introduced.

1.2 Context of the Research

My initial introduction to the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche took place during a first year lecture on Contemporary Culture by Dr. Adrian Konik at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University six years ago. Ever since that introduction to Nietzsche I developed a personal interest in his philosophy and life. Nietzsche’s radical approach and critique of morality, religion, knowledge and human psychology appeared to be a gateway into personal self-evaluation. As the researcher I aimed to create a psychobiography of Friedrich Nietzsche who was born in Röcken Saxony in 1844 and died in Weimar, Germany in 1900. Nietzsche’s thought-provoking philosophy challenged the fundamental moral institutions of his time. His criticism of western culture and the Christian religion was based on the premise that these moral institutions were not affirming life. Nietzsche’s philosophy has been described as rebellious and destructive with intentions of creating and self-becoming, as opposed to the religious constraints he grew up in as a child. As the researcher, I am acutely aware of the intertwined complexity of distinguishing between Nietzsche’s life and philosophy. Nietzsche himself made paradoxical statements in his quasi-autobiography (Ecce Homo, 1888), such as “I am thy labyrinth” and “My writings are one, I am another.” These statements reflect the complexity that exists regarding Nietzsche and have been acknowledged by the researcher with the necessary methodological caution. The researcher intends to primarily explore Nietzsche’s life and not his philosophy, albeit the researcher may refer to certain philosophical aspects that may contribute to the exploration of his life.

Psychobiography entails the study of historically significant individuals over their entire lifespan with the aim of uncovering and reconstructing their lives with reference to psychological theory (Fouché & van Niekerk, 2010). Psychobiography will be explained in greater detail in section 1.4 and in Chapter 2. The personality theory of Carl Rogers’ (1961)
fully functioning person will be used as the theoretical framework to explore and describe whether Friedrich Nietzsche lived as a fully functioning person.

1.3 Aim of the Research Study

The aim of this research study was to explore and describe the life of Friedrich Nietzsche by means of Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person.

1.4 Overview of Psychobiography

This psychobiography of Nietzsche’s life falls within the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm focuses on how persons attach meaning to their experiences; hence it has its roots within phenomenology. I, as psychobiographer, explore Nietzsche’s life by means of the psychological theory of Carl Rogers’ (1961) fully functioning person.

Psychobiography as a research method has its roots in qualitative research. The term psychobiography is derived from two different disciplines: psychology and biography, therefore, making psychobiography an interdisciplinary research field (Fouché & van Niekerk, 2010). Fouché and van Niekerk mention that these two disciplines, psychology and biography, differ in that psychology rests upon theoretical knowledge when studying an individual. Fouché and van Niekerk further state that psychobiographies entail the study of exceptional and even obscure individuals through a systematic and descriptive approach to an individual’s life-history. Elms (1994) described psychobiography as a way of practicing psychology and not just biography. In addition, Elms stated that psychologists have much to learn from studying a whole human being or one life at a time.

1.5 Carl Rogers’ Theory of the Fully Functioning Person

To conceptualise Nietzsche’s psychological well-being, I, as researcher, have utilised Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person.

According to Rogers (1961) the person who is psychologically free moves in the direction of becoming a more fully functioning person. Fully functioning persons are more able to live fully in and with each and all of their feelings and responses and are less fearful and more able to experience all aspects of their lives. Being more open to evidence from all sources, they also evaluate evidence personally and are completely engaged in the process of being and becoming themselves. Fully functioning persons are soundly and realistically social and
live more completely in the moment, becoming more fully functioning organisms because of personal awareness which flows freely in and through their experience.

As the psychobiographer of this study, I have only utilised a specific aspect of Rogers’ (1961) broad theory of personality, regarding the fully functioning person to explore and describe Nietzsche’s life. The comprehensive and systematic data collection and analysis grid is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

1.6 Research Subject, Friedrich Nietzsche

The study is a single-subject qualitative psychobiography, with the subject having been selected via purposive sampling. Friedrich Nietzsche was chosen for two specific reasons, firstly, the researcher’s personal interest in Nietzsche’s philosophy of self-evaluation and attempting to live authentically – not conforming to religious, social or cultural doctrine without critique and the researcher’s personal development as a person and as a humanist thinker.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born on 15 October 1844, in the Saxon village of Röcken in Germany. Besides producing a historical overview of Nietzsche, I consider it important to explore the socio-cultural context in which he lived. The political climate in Germany during the 1800s which was characterized by social class differences: a class system which political theorist and philosopher Karl Marx (1818 - 1883) popularized as bourgeoisie culture (Blackbourn & Evans, 1990). Young (2010) mentioned two significant influences regarding Nietzsche’s place of birth. The first was of political importance in that Röcken was situated in that part of Saxony which had been annexed in 1815 by the rising dominance of Prussia. As will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5 of the study, Prussia loomed large in Nietzsche’s intellectual background. The second consideration about the location of Nietzsche’s birthplace was its position in the heartland of the Protestant Reformation: Röcken is about 70 kilometers from Eisleben, the birthplace of Martin Luther (1483 - 1586). The significance of the socio-cultural context of Nietzsche’s birthplace for Young (2010) creates a paradox in that the future self-styled ‘Antichrist’ was born into the cradle of Protestantism. Furthermore, the cultural influences during Nietzsche’s life included figures such as Johan Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750), who lived about 25 kilometers southwest of Leipzig, and about fifty kilometers from Halle, where the German composer George Friedrich Handel (1685 - 1789) was born and worked.
Nietzsche was christened, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, because he was born on the birthday of the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and because Nietzsche’s father, Karl Ludwig, was an admiring royalist (Young, 2010). According to Hollingdale (1965), Ludwig and Franziska, Nietzsche’s parents, had two more children: a daughter, Elizabeth, who was born on 10th July 1846, and a second son, Joseph, who was born in February 1848 but passed away in infancy. According to Young (2010), Ludwig, was a superintendent in the Lutheran church and a writer of treatises on moral and theological subjects. Furthermore, as Young purports, Nietzsche’s mother, Franziska, was the daughter of David Ernest Oehler, pastor in the nearby village of Probles. Nietzsche was thus born into a family of the Lutheran belief.

Hollingdale (1965) states that the first four years of Nietzsche’s early childhood were spent in the tranquil countryside of Saxony. According to Young (2010) the young Nietzsche had no real image of life beyond the trees and ponds of Röcken. The tranquil life in the countryside was soon shattered by the untimely death of his father, Ludwig, on July 27, 1849. The death of Nietzsche’s father is believed to be a significant event in his development and intellectual disposition. Young stated that Nietzsche experienced “the loss of his father as a wound” (Young, 2010, p.12). Though he was only five years old, the loss of his father marked him for life. The cause of his father’s death was established after an autopsy revealed severe brain damage. It seems certain that Nietzsche lost his beloved father to some type of brain disease (Young, 2010).

Young (2010) mentions that after the loss of Nietzsche’s father the Röcken vicarage was presided over by women: Ludwig’s widowed mother, Erdmunthe, a kind but sickly woman, his spinster step-sisters, Auguste, who ran the household and suffered from gastric illnesses, and Rosalie, who was mildly overbearing and suffered from nerves, and was interested in politics which was unusual for women of her time. According to Huber-Sper (2002) the political climate of the early 19th century, saw women living in a society of patriarchal conventions. Yet Nietzsche seemed to have no difficulty being raised by a household of females, as Young (2010) stated that he “was fond of them all” (p.6).

Since Pastor Nietzsche was no longer alive, the vicarage in which the Nietzsche family lived was taken over by a new pastor. Compelled to vacate the vicarage, the family moved to Naumburg on the Saale River, where Nietzsche attended a private preparatory school, the Domgymnasium (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche’s intellectual prowess was evident at an early age. At age six he could already read and write, having been taught by his mother.
Furthermore, Hollingdale (1965) states that Nietzsche had artistic ability and it was no surprise when he was awarded free admission to the famous Pforta School. Pforta was a hard and a strict school, but it was what Nietzsche required at the age of 14.

Young (2010) observed that, for most of his childhood, Nietzsche intended to enter the priesthood, through identification with his deceased father. During Nietzsche’s years as a student at the University of Bonn, he decided to abandon the study of theology (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche’s belief in the truth of Christianity and the validity of religion in general was virtually extinct before he left Pforta. At the time he had no firm idea of what he was going to do with his life but he must have realized that the religious profession of his father and both his grandfathers was not going to be his (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche was also called upon for military service but Young (2010) states that on October 15, 1816, his twenty-fourth birthday, he was officially declared temporarily unfit for military service.

Throughout Nietzsche’s lifespan he had one notable romantic relationship with a young Russian lady named Lou Salomé. The beautiful and brilliant Lou Salomé was a scholar of philosophy and had distinguishing characteristics such as courage, intelligence, resoluteness and clarity of purpose (Young, 2010). Young stated that Salomé was determined about her own liberation and was destined to overcome the denial to women of all but elementary education. Nietzsche’s attraction and love for her was short-lived due to her rejection of Nietzsche’s marriage proposal. The relationship was the cause of the several traumatic events in Nietzsche’s life and a significant change in his intellectual outlook (Young, 2010).

The latter part of Nietzsche’s life was spent submerged in his writings. Furthermore, his deteriorating health was a primary cause of his inability to settle down in a specific town or village. This resulted in self-isolation and a solitary life for the remainder of his life. Nietzsche was mentally handicapped for the last ten years of his life due to a syphilitic condition. Nietzsche’s death has been described as tedious and after eleven years of ill health he died on 25 August 1900 (Hollingdale, 1965).

1.7 Data Collection

The data collected on Friedrich Nietzsche’s life were drawn from various data sources. Data collected for this study were obtained from several information sources including primary document(s) (a document produced by the subject, such as Nietzsche’s personal quasi-autobiography, Ecce Homo (1889) and secondary source(s) (documents
produced by other authors) such as those of Young (2010) and Hollingdale (1965). I developed a data collection grid in order to collect data systematically on the life of Friedrich Nietzsche; the data collection grid will be discussed in Chapter 4. As Yin (2003) purports, multiple sources enhance the reliability and validity of the data collected. This is because published data are stable resources that can be frequently and repeatedly reviewed and they allow for cross-referencing of biographical information.

1.8 Structural Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of 8 chapters. The overview above provides a general orientation to the reader. Each aspect is elaborated on in the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 aims to facilitate an understanding of psychobiography as a research method. This is done through describing qualitative research, the different paradigms within the research approach and then psychobiography as a research method. The value and development of psychobiography concludes the chapter. Chapter 3 introduces and describes Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. Chapter 4 focuses on the ethical aspects of psychobiography and the methodology, preliminary methodological considerations and research design of the study.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with the practical aspects of the study; Chapter 5 presents the data collection by simultaneously formulating the biography of Nietzsche’s life. The findings are then discussed in Chapter 6 that applies the theoretical framework of Rogers’ fully functioning person to Nietzsche’s biography. Chapter 7 serves as the conclusion where the researcher summarises the research process and highlights the limitations, value of the study, and recommendations for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided the reader with an introduction to the study. The context, rationale and concepts of this study have been introduced. The theoretical and the research subject have been introduced, and the structural overview of the dissertation. The following chapter aims to discuss psychobiography as a research method.
CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Overview of Psychobiographical Research

Chapter Preview

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of psychobiography as a research method. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003) qualitative research is characterised by an array of interconnected fields, terms, concepts and paradigms. Firstly, the chapter describes qualitative research, in which psychobiographical research is grounded and the different paradigms of qualitative research. Secondly, various aspects relating to psychobiography as a specific research method are described. Thirdly, the chapter explores the universal characteristics of psychobiography. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the value of psychobiography and its development as a research approach.

2.1 Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative research as a form of social inquiry that is inherently multi-method in approach. Examples of qualitative research methods are case study, ethnography, and phenomenology (Myers, 1997). Qualitative research has a variety of research methods and research paradigms and has been described as an umbrella research method (Myers, 1997). A distinct motivation why social scientists conduct qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, arises from the observational difference between humans and the natural world, in that humans are able to converse (Myers, 1997). This distinct difference between humans and the natural world allows qualitative researchers to conduct more exploratory and descriptive research. Qualitative research is based on language and the spoken word. As a qualitative researcher, I would uncover meaning and interpretation by means of communication between persons. In studying the life of Nietzsche it is possible to construct a life narrative that would be unfolding and descriptive. The current study utilises psychobiography as the qualitative research method to explore and describe the life of Friedrich Nietzsche according to the psychological theory of Carl Rogers’ fully functioning person.
2.2 Qualitative Research Paradigms

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) mention that qualitative research has no distinct theory or paradigm that is distinctively recognised or associated with it. A range of paradigms have been included in qualitative research, from constructivism, cultural studies, and interpretive to phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A paradigm is considered to be a set of socially accepted beliefs and norms that is accepted within a scientific community. Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight three types of paradigmatic perspectives within quantitative and qualitative research; namely, the positivist (empirical) paradigm; the interpretive (phenomenology) paradigm and the constructivist paradigm. Numerous research methods and theoretical perspectives function within the above-mentioned qualitative research paradigms (Biggs, 2007). For the purpose of this research study the interpretive paradigm will be employed as it is congruent with psychobiography as a qualitative research method.

2.2.1 The Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm has its roots in history and philosophy, and focuses on how persons attach meaning to their subjective experiences. The sociological philosopher, Max Weber (1844-1920) believed that social scientists should be concerned with the interpretive understanding of human beings (Mack, 2010). Qualitative researchers, more specifically psychobiographers, aim to explore and describe a person within the context of his/her life (Mack, 2010). This psychobiography of Nietzsche’s life is based on the principles of the interpretive paradigm. I, as psychobiographer, explore Nietzsche’s life by means of the psychological theory of Carl Rogers’ fully functioning person.

2.2.2 The Phenomenological Paradigm

Phenomenology has its roots within the realm of philosophy and can be found in the philosophical writings of Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976). The approach focuses on ontological questions and the lived experiences of individuals. From an epistemological point of view the phenomenological approach rests within the context of subjective reality and knowledge, viewing how people interpret their lived experiences as primary (Lester, 1999). Through the analysis of qualitative data, for example, biographical data, the phenomenological process enables the researcher – psychobiographer - to interpret and attach subjective meaning to the research subject (van
Genechten, 2009). As the majority of data sources for a psychobiographical research consist primarily of biographical material, such a phenomenological experience or processes exist within psychobiography.

2.3 Psychobiographical Research

2.3.1 Definition and description of psychobiography

The term psychobiography is derived from two different disciplines: psychology and biography, therefore, making psychobiography an interdisciplinary research field (Fouché & van Niekerk, 2010). Fouché and van Niekerk mention that these two disciplines, psychology and biography differ, in that psychology rests upon theoretical knowledge from which to work when studying an individual. Elms (1994) describes psychobiography as a way of practicing psychology and not just biography. In addition, Elms states that psychologists have much to learn from studying a whole human being or one life at a time. Fouché and van Niekerk further state that psychobiographies entail the study of exceptional and even obscure individuals. This is achieved by a systematic and descriptive approach to an individual’s life history.

Psychobiography is seen as a qualitative research method; therefore, data sources such as books, journal articles, biographies, internet sources and any other relevant material regarding the research subject are used. Psychobiographers rely on primary and secondary biographical material relating to the research subject. Relevant data sources enable the researcher to engage subjectively with the data and attach meaning (Mack, 2010).

Psychobiography does not explore isolated events regarding the subjects’ life but all dimensions of the individual’s life (Elms, 1994). For that reason, I also explored Nietzsche’s entire life by means of a systemic approach. The data collection and analysis grid only provides a framework in which to collect data of Nietzsche’s life within different systems. The practical application of the grid will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 with regard to the Data collection and findings.

Fouché and van Niekerk also state that research subjects are usually identified by name; this characteristic alludes to the subjective reality between researcher and subject when conducting a psychobiography.
2.4 Genealogy of Psychobiography

Shultz (2001) suggests that the roots of psychobiography can be found in the era of ancient Greece but Sigmund Freud's analysis of Leonardo da Vinci in 1910 - titled: Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood - is generally considered to be the first modern psychobiography. Due to Freud’s role in the re-emergence of psychobiography the research approach has historically retained a Freudian or psychodynamic orientation, but other more recently used theories include narrative models of identity, such as Dan McAdams's (1994) life story model.

Biographies and autobiographies are not new phenomena but have a long history as cultural practices (Mascuch, 1997). One, known as pathography, aims at exposing the neurotic drives hidden in the lives and works of famous and influential people, for example, Lytton Strachey’s biographical studies of eminent Victorians such as Florence Nightingale, in which selfish compulsions were found at the root of their good deeds (McAdams, 1988).

Only in recent years has psychobiography retreated from a psychoanalytic stance (Elms, 1994). Personal life histories have been involved in the creation and development of exploring and understanding personality in psychology (Schultz, 2005). The concept of psychobiography is defined as a biographical study which makes explicit use of any kind of formal or systematic psychology. According to Van Genechten (2009) psychobiographies have appeared intermittently during the 20th century. Fouché and van Niekerk (2010) in describing the development of psychobiographical research in South Africa, mention that Burgers (1939) conducted the first analysis of an extraordinary South African life – that of Cornelius Jacobus Langenhoven. Then, after a lapse of 60 years, the life of General Jan Smuts was explored by means of psychobiographical research. Chabani Manganyi published a biography on Gerard Sekota (2004), in which he explored Sekota’s life from a clinical psychological perspective. Since then, according to Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010), psychobiographical research in South Africa has been nurtured in the departments of psychology at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Rhodes University, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of the Free State.
The significant value of psychobiographical case studies has been advocated by various scholars in the field of life history research for the development and testing of theories relating to human development (Alexander, 1988).

2.5 Critique launched Against Psychobiography

In spite of the development of psychobiographical research, it has also been criticized for its lack of scientific objectivity and integrity as a qualitative research method. In order to uphold the integrity of psychobiographical research, psychobiographers have identified a number of preliminary methodological considerations that could address certain of the potential limitations of psychobiographical research. Researchers such as Elms (1988) and Runyan (1988a) pointed out that psychobiography has been criticized in the discipline of scientific psychology and that the prominent issue was that “bad psychobiography was easier to write than good psychobiography” (Elms, 1994, p.4). Elms, further defended psychobiography by emphasizing that it was not an easy genre of research. Schultz (2005) also identified markers for “good psychobiography”, such as ”data convergence” and ”logical soundness” as part of constructing viable psychobiographical research (p.7). However, a ”good psychobiography” requires in-depth immersion in several biographical data sources, sound psychological knowledge of the subject’s socio-historical context, and good literary skill (Elms, 1994).

The preliminary methodological consideration will be elaborated on in Chapter 4 where I will be discussing the ethical implications regarding psychobiographical research.

2.6 The Contribution of Psychobiography

The developing field of psychobiographical research in South Africa and abroad has its value within social science. Throughout the growth of psychobiography the several valuable aspects have been highlighted by researchers such as Carlson (1988), Fiske (1988), Mouton (1988), Elms (1994), Howe (1997), Roberts (2002), Mc Adams (2006), and Fouché and van Niekerk (2010).

2.6.1 The Extraordinary and Enigmatic Individual

Psychobiographical research subjects are chosen based on their exceptional qualities, extraordinary lives, or even obscurity in society (Howe, 1997; Mc Adams, 2006). Nietzsche was chosen as the research subject because of my personal interest in his life, his prominence
as a philosopher, and because of his ambition to live a meaningful life. A significant amount of writers have focused on Nietzsche’s philosophy and its value to society. I have also chosen to study Nietzsche as a person and not as a philosopher, therefore, contributing to the understanding of the person behind the philosophy.

2.6.2 The Context is Critical

Neuman (2006) highlights the importance of “social context for understanding the social world” (p.158), meaning that Nietzsche’s life can be understood differently in different cultures and historical eras. As previously mentioned in the context of the study, I consider it important to explore Nietzsche’s life within the systemic context in which he lived, such as the economic, political, religious and cultural climate of his time. Neuman (2006) states that having sensitivity to the context of the subject allows a wider variety of influences to be considered regarding the subject’s life, hence, enabling a more complex narrative to unfold. As a consequence of psychobiographies concentrating on finished lives, researchers are able to trace patterns of human development over the entire course of a person’s life and experience (Elms, 1994). Fiske (1988) claims that it becomes possible to form a more comprehensive understanding of personality in action which enables the researcher to document different dimensions and processes of an individual’s functioning at any point in time and in any specific situation.

2.6.3 Subjective Reality

Psychobiography allows for an in-depth exposure and understanding of the research subject and this creates a personal relationship of interest and empathy between researcher and subject. Mouton (1988) views this relationship as a platform for writing compelling life stories. The principles of the interpretive paradigm of attaching meaning to a person or life story can be found in the subjective reality between psychobiographer and research subject.

2.6.4 Testing and Refining a Theoretical Framework

McAdams (1994) states that psychobiography uses psychological theory as a framework to expose the story of an individual’s life. As previously mentioned, the theoretical framework of Carl Rogers’ (1961) fully functioning person will be utilized to explore whether Nietzsche lived a fully functioning life. Carlson (1988) mentioned that psychobiography provides a suitable framework for the refinement of psychological theory. In this regard,
Fouché and van Niekerk (2010) called for more theory driven research. The selection or choosing a theory will be discussed in Chapter 4.

2.7 The Development of Psychobiography

The development of psychobiography can be seen internationally in the work and publications of several authors such as Elms, 1994; Elms, 2007; Howe, 1997; McAdams, 1994; Runyan, 1982b and Schultz, 2005. The scientific creditability of psychobiographical research has also undergone immense critique within the scientific community (Runyan, 1988a). Scholars such as Elms (1994) and Runyan (1988a) have defended psychobiography by acknowledging preliminary methodological considerations. Elms (1994) stated the contribution that psychobiography has to offer is that psychobiography is a way of practicing psychology. South African psychologists and psychobiographers Fouché, Smit, Watson and van Niekerk conducted a systematic review of psychobiography in 2007. The review identified several growth areas pertaining to psychobiography in South Africa. The first illustrated a need for further development of post-graduate psychobiographical research at South African universities, and for more gender and racially balanced research studies. In addition, these researchers found that psychobiographies in South Africa required the use of a wider range of psychological theories or models to uncover the lives of individuals. The need for marketing and exposure of psychobiographical research at congresses and publications in scholarly journals was also identified as a shortcoming at the time of the review (Fouché & van Niekerk, 2010).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed qualitative research methods and psychobiography as the research method that will be employed in the current study of Friedrich Nietzsche. The development of psychobiography, qualitative research method, can be found in the publications of international and local scholars and students. The value of psychobiography to the scientific field of psychology should continue to grow through research studies locally and internationally, for the specific reason that psychobiography is a way of practicing psychology (Elms, 1994).
CHAPTER 3

Theory of the Fully Functioning Person

Chapter Preview

This chapter examines the theoretical framework used in the study, being Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person and aims to describe and define central concepts of that theory. The researcher will focus on a specific aspect of Rogers’ broad theory of personality, the fully functioning person, that will be utilised to describe and explore Nietzsche’s life. The researcher will also allude to aspects of humanistic psychology, Carl Rogers as a person, and criticisms launched against his theory. The latter half of the chapter is focussed on the current status of the theory.

3.1 Overview of Humanistic Psychology

The field of humanistic thought stems from the earlier philosophical traditions of existentialism and phenomenology. Thinkers such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche are seen as some of the pioneering thinkers that gave rise to a humanistic school of thought in the 19th century. The major impetus of humanistic psychology originated during the mid-20th century. The work and thought of psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Rolo May, Carl Rogers and Viktor Frankl amongst others, contributed to the development of this specific branch of psychology, also known as the third force in psychology (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003). In contrast to the approaches of earlier psychological schools of thought such as psychoanalysis and behaviourism the aim of humanistic psychology is to focus on all encompassing human issues including hope, love, being and becoming.

According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2003), Carl Rogers identified himself with the humanistic-phenomenological school of thought. Meyer et al. (2003) state, that Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of personality is based on three central assumptions. These are that the individual has constructive potential; that the nature of the individual is basically goal-directed, and that the individual is capable of changing. Carl Rogers also emphasised the significance of people’s subjective experience of themselves (their self-concept) and its influence on personality Meyer et al. (2003).
According to Meyer et al. (2003), Rogers believed that the primary function of all life was to become that which one truly is – a mode of thinking derived from the Danish philosopher Sören Kierkegaard. This particular mode of thinking is also congruent with Nietzsche’s maxim of his quasi-autobiography *Ecce Homo* (1888), to become what one is. Rogers (1961) suggests that all organisms, humans and even plants, have a natural tendency to strive for utmost development of their potential, regardless of what setbacks may befall them.

### 3.2 The Person behind the Theory – Carl Roger’s in Context

Carl Ransom Rogers was born on 8 January 1902 in Chicago and was the fourth of six children. Both his parents, Walter and Julia, attended college and established themselves as notable business people in their community (Thorne, 1992). Unlike Rogers’ intellectual contemporaries from Europe, during the emergence of psychology as a science, he was of Midwestern American descent (Thorne, 1992). Rogers (1961) described his home environment as religious with close family ties. The Rogers family had an uncompromising ethical system which was supplemented by the principle of hard work.

Rogers (1961) distinctly describes his early family life and social interaction, which was non-existent, as ‘solitary’ (p.6). The family did not socialise or mix with other people in the local community. Rogers recalled that his family did not indulge in alcoholic beverages, dancing, cards or the theatre. Rogers knew that his parents had the children’s well-being at heart but also had a great deal of control over them as children, which as children they accepted at the time (Rogers, 1961; Thorne, 1992).

When Rogers was age twelve, his father invested in a farm as he was a successful businessman and ventured into agriculture. Rogers (1961) believed that part of his father’s intention to buy a farm was to take them as children out of the city life and away from negative influences. Rogers mentioned that his time on the farm introduced him to scientific inquiry and that he started to develop an interest in nocturnal moths which he began to experiment with.

Rogers (1961) started his college career in agriculture but changed to history. Thorne (1992) states that at the end of Rogers’ sophomore year he firmly believed that he was to be a Christian minister. As a result he changed his course from agriculture to history, as he believed it would better prepare him for theology. Rogers was fortunate to be chosen as one
of a dozen students from across the country that travelled to China to attend an international World Student Christian Federation Conference. The tour lasted more than six months and was a defining moment in his religious and intellectual development. Rogers (1961) highlighted that his journey to China was four years after the First World War and saw how "bitterly the German and French people hated each other, even though as individuals they seemed very likeable" (p.7). For the first time Rogers realised that people were different and had divergent belief systems. His time in China, as Rogers (1961) described it, was when he became an independent person. Subsequently, Rogers had the need to enter a profession where he could think and believe as freely as possible. He became interested in psychological and psychiatric lectures, and people such as Goodwin Watson, Harrison Elliott and Marian Kenworthy all contributed to his growing interest in psychology (Rogers, 1961).

During all the changes that took place in Rogers’ life there was a specific person who contributed to his personal development. Rogers (1961) briefly highlighted that during his trip to China he fell in love with a childhood friend that he had known for many years – and whom he eventually married. He acknowledged that her steady and sustained love during a number of years contributed to his development as a person.

Carl Rogers’ philosophy and theory of personality underwent a time of growth and is still considered to be one of the most influential theories in psychology. It is worth highlighting the time or era Roger’s lived and the possible contribution it may have had to his theory of personality. I find it of value to highlight the context in which Rogers’ lived and how it may be linked to him as a person and psychological theorist. Rogers lived between 1902 and 1987. He survived the first and second world wars and the financial crisis of the late 1920s. The imposed religious and ethical constraints of his early family life and his time spent in China, encountering new cultures and beliefs, could have possibly contributed to his appreciation and understanding of others, and may have led to change within himself (Rogers, 1961). In conclusion, is it the researchers’ opinion that Rogers’ theory of personality, and his life philosophy, could have been a response to the existential crisis of his era and a means of actualization of his own life. The following section will focus on the central concepts in Rogers’ theory of personality.
3.3 Central Concepts of Rogers’ Theory of Personality

Rogers’ (1961) theory of personality is underpinned by the belief that all living organisms have the innate ability or tendency to achieve or develop their highest potential. The actualising tendency will be discussed in further detail below in the section dealing with the fully functioning person. There are central concepts or main ideas within Rogers’ theory that are briefly mentioned and described by the researcher in order to facilitate a comprehensive overview of Rogers’ theory of personality and what he valued within his psychotherapy. The following concepts are of significance in describing Rogers’ theory of personality:

3.3.1 Genuineness

As part of Rogers’ (1961) hypothesis of psychological well-being, he recognised the element of ‘genuineness’ as a contributing component to being an aid to an individual in the process of becoming fully functioning. Rogers (1961) explains the aspect of genuineness within the therapeutic process as follows: "I need to be aware of my own feelings, in so far as possible, rather than presenting an outward façade of one attitude, while actually holding another attitude at a deeper or unconscious level” (Rogers, 1961, p. 33.). Together with this aspect of presenting a genuine attitude, Rogers also emphasize the ability or the willingness to communicate ‘in my own words and my behaviour, the various feelings and attitudes which exist in me’ (Rogers, 1961, p. 33.)

Rogers (1961) believes this to be a crucial starting point to a helping relationship, even if the attitudes or feelings within him are not conducive, it is important to be ‘real’ with another person (p. 33.).

3.3.2 Acceptance

The second component Rogers (1961) identified as being an aid to an individual in the process of fully functioning is the element of ‘acceptance’ (p. 34.). Rogers explains this component as follows:

…the more acceptance and liking I feel toward this individual, the more I will be creating a relationship which he (sic) can use. By acceptance I mean a warm regard
for him (sic) as a person of unconditional self-worth – of value no matter what his condition, his behaviour, or his feelings (Rogers, 1961, p. 34.).

As individuals we have a need to receive positive, accepting and uplifting feedback from others. This contributes to the individual developing good feelings about him or herself (Thorne, 1992). Therefore, the component of acceptance creates an environment of safety for the individual, hence, Rogers (1961) believes that safety within the helping profession is a prized factor.

### 3.3.3 Empathy

The third aspect of Rogers’ (1961) theory of personality, within the process of helping an individual, is the element of ‘empathy’ (p. 34.). Rogers (1961) states that an added significance to the helping relationship is his desire to understand the person or circumstance; he states that acceptance has little value if there is no attempt in trying to understand the person or the circumstances. It is only when, Rogers, as therapist, could see or experience the feelings of his clients that he could have understanding of his or her difficulty. This leads to a free exploration of the challenges that the person is faced with.

The above-mentioned elements of genuineness, acceptance and empathy are central components to Carl Rogers’ person-centred theory and psychotherapy. Rogers considered these concepts as vital in aiding an individual to deal with whatever personal challenges they may have. Rogers (1961) concludes that when the individual can experience these elements that have been described within himself as a therapist and within others, they may be able to positively direct themselves to actualization and be more fully functioning.

### 3.4 Theory of the Fully Functioning Person

Brodley and Bozarth (1991) highlight that Rogers’ (1961) concept of the fully functioning person has been mistakenly perceived as a state of being and not as a process. Throughout Rogers’ professional career as a person-centred therapist he observed certain directionalities within his positively responding clients, which led him to formulating the concept of the fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961).

According to Rogers (1961) the person who is psychologically free moves in the direction of becoming a more fully functioning person. The person is more able to live fully
in and with each and all of his/her feelings and responses and is less fearful and more able to experience all of his/her experiences. Being more open to evidence from all sources, the person also evaluates evidence personally and is completely engaged in the process of being and becoming him- or herself. The fully functioning person is soundly and realistically social and lives more completely in the moment, becoming a more fully functioning organism because of personal awareness which flows freely in and through his/her experience.

The following aspects have been identified by Rogers (1961) as directionalities that indicate optimal psychological well-being of a fully functioning person. These directionalities are as follow:

3.4.1 Actualising tendency

Rogers (1961) believed that man, as well as plants, have the directional urge to develop and achieve a higher state of being - ‘a motivational drive’ (Joseph & Patterson, 2007, p.120). It is evident that persons who possess or display this actualising tendency and who are open to a variety of experiences, will feel free to make choices, live existentially and trust their own human judgement. These characteristics contribute to the conditions required for persons to achieve a more fully functioning mode of living.

The actualising tendency is the ultimate level of psychological well-being according to Rogers’ (1961) theory. According to DeRobertis (2006) when the actualising tendency is adopted by the self, or person, the person is orientated to future development of who he/she would ultimately like to become.

Throne (1992) mentions that Rogers acknowledged that the concept of the actualising tendency could be found within different psychological theories, such as Abraham Maslow’s theory of motivation. The actualising tendency is considered to be the driving factor underpinning Rogers’ theory of personality.

3.4.2 An Increasing Openness to Experience

According to Rogers (1961) this principle involves increasing movement away from defensiveness towards its polar opposite, increasing openness to experience. According to this principle individuals move towards becoming more able to listen to and experience what is going on within them. Meyer et al. (2003) state that all experiences such as memory, colour
or sound will be openly experienced as part of the fully functioning person. Furthermore, Rogers (1961) states that such persons will be more open to their negative feelings, for example, of fear, discouragement and pain. In addition, they are also more open to positive feelings of courage, and tenderness, and awe. They feel increasingly free to be aware of their feelings and to experience them subjectively rather than shutting them out of awareness.

3.4.3 Increasing Existential Living

According to Rogers (1961) this principle states that persons who are fully open to their new experience without defensiveness, will experience each moment as new. As a result such persons will realize that what they are in the next moment, and what they will do, grows out of that moment and cannot be predicted in advance either by the person or others. Such living in the moment means an absence of rigidity, tight organization, and the imposition of structure on experience. It means instead maximum adaptability, discovery of structure in experience, and a flowing, changing organization of self and personality.

3.4.4 An Increasing Trust in One’s Organism

According to Rogers’ (1961) another characteristic of persons who are living as fully functioning persons is an increasing trust in themselves, which entails physical and psychological functions and is the central figure by which a person interacts with others as a means of arriving at the most satisfying behaviour in each existential situation. Henderson and Kirschenbaum (1989) state that, instead of depending on social norms or institutional codes, individuals that act upon what feels right in a given situation experience this mode of organismic trust as a competent and fulfilling guide to their behaviour.

3.4.5 Creativity as a Characteristic of the Fully Functioning Person

Furthermore, Rogers (1961) purported that fully functioning persons involved in the directional process of becoming would be recognized by the student of evolution as persons that can adapt and survive in an ever-changing world. The person would be able to creatively make adjustments to new as well as historical conditions and would be a fit vanguard of human development. Henderson and Kirschenbaum (1989) state that the adaptability of the fully functioning person will allow him or her to move forward even when he or she is unhappy in a given environment. Rogers (1961) considered creativity to be an implication of
a fully functioning person. Such a person trusts his or her own thoughts and feelings and has the freedom to define their own means of creativity.

### 3.4.6 Basic Trustworthiness of Human Nature

According to Rogers (1961), when persons are functioning freely, constructively and in a trustworthy manner, their reactions to physical and psychological experiences would be positive and constructive. This results in an increasing trust in the person’s own judgement in a given situation. Meyer et al. (2003) also state that based on the person’s openness to experiences and organismic trust, such a person, can respond positively and constructively to their own needs and that of the environment.

The above-mentioned directionalities will form the basis of analysis for the psychobiographical study of Nietzsche’s life. The researcher will attempt to explore and describe Nietzsche life by means of Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. This can be found in the data analysis grid (see Appendix 2).

### 3.5 Criticism of Carl Rogers’ Theory

Throughout Rogers’ positive influence and contributions to the science of psychology his theory has also undergone criticism by scholars from the past and present. Dr Michael Miller cited in the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* (2006), stated that Carl Rogers’ person-centered approach may nowadays only be used as a background influence to therapy and not as a specific technique. Thorne (1992) mentioned that despite the critique regarding the perceived naivety and overtly positive approach of Rogers’ theory he has been considered as one of the most influential figures of the twentieth century in psychotherapy. In contrast to the pessimistic psychoanalytic view of human nature, Rogers’ theory is situated on the polar opposite. According to Thorne (1992) Rogers’ theory has also been criticized for being narcissistic: “the individual becomes the only arbiter and evaluator of his conduct” (p.68), meaning that there is no constructive role that religion or tradition has on human development. Patterson (1993) described a lack of focus concerning neurosis and the causality of psychopathology within Rogers’ theory. Rogers’ overtly positive views on human nature have also been criticized for negating issues such as evil tendencies within individuals.

The researcher has taken cognizance of past and present criticism of Rogers’ theory of personality development. It is in the researcher’s opinion important for research studies to
acknowledge criticisms of a theory. This enhances the trustworthiness of the study by reducing bias towards a specific school of thought or theoretical disposition and enables exploring limitations of theory. The limitations of the study will be discussed in more detail in the latter half of the dissertation.

3.6 Current Status of Carl Rogers’ Theory

Despite the invaluable contribution Carl Rogers made to the field of psychology, his person-centred theory has been subject to possible decline amongst psychotherapists. According to Elkin (2008) there has been a negation of Rogerian theory amongst clinical psychology and psychiatry in the United States of America. Elkin highlights’ that clinical psychology and post-graduate training programmes in the USA are primarily based on the medical model. Elkin believes that Rogers’ emphasis on the individual’s innate ability (actualizing tendency) to overcome psychological disturbance is contrary to the conformist clinical psychology approach to clients, “as doctors who diagnose mental disorders and administer treatments to patients” (p.6).

Furthermore, Elkin (2008) argues that the possible underlining reason for the negation or exclusion of Rogerian theory and other critical issues that are not included in psychological practice and research may be due to the current or exiting political and economic status quo. Elkin emphasises the importance of fields such as critical psychology, which started during the 1970s in Germany, and which focuses on social justice and examines ”how psychology may collude, wittingly or unwittingly, with social and political forces that are harmful to human beings” (p.7.). Elkin argues that Rogerian theory has contributed immensely to the field of psychology and psychotherapy, therefore, should not be subjugated to the political or economic trends of a given era.

Patterson (1993) identified a disturbing amount of dissatisfaction about status of person-centred practitioners after the death of Carl Rogers. Concerns arose regarding Rogers’ theory and proposals for extending, supplementing or modifying the theory. Patterson (1993) positively recognised the compatibility of experimental psychology to person-centred psychology, whilst other theorists maintained the opinion that person-centred and experimental approaches are not compatible. Patterson’s concern was that the person-centred approach should only be reformed or changed based on valid and reliable research results.
However, in response to Patterson’s (1993) position of the traditional person-centred view, Cain (2000) argued that in order to ensure the application and existence of a person-centred approach, the theory must progress and develop to its full potential. Cain (2000) argued that the stagnation of person-centred theory, in contrast to the continuous development of cognitive theory and the re-emergence of psychoanalytic theory, can mainly be attributed to a lack of research within the field of person-centred theory. Cain concluded that researchers and practitioners must remember that the fundamental obligation is to respond to the needs of the client and if those needs necessitate a change in approach or theory researchers and practitioners must respond. “We only need to remind ourselves that the facts are friendly” (Cain, 2000, p.9).

However, despite the political adversity that has befallen Rogers’ theory within the field of clinical psychology (Elkin, 2008), Person-Centred therapy has been a foundational construct for the rise of new fields in psychology. Joseph and Patterson (2007) have examined the influence of Rogers’ theory in the theory and research of positive psychology. Joseph and Patterson (2007) demonstrate, despite criticisms in the past, that through meta-theoretical convergence by person-centred theory and positive psychology that empirical evidence within person-centred theory is possible.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person was introduced in this chapter as were aspects relating to Rogers’ theory as a whole. Key aspects such as central concepts to Rogers’ person-centred therapy were discussed, the person behind the theory, criticisms and the current status of Rogers’ theory. Chapter four deals with methodological aspects of the study and Chapter five undertakes a description and exploration of Nietzsche’s life.
CHAPTER 4  
Methodology and Research Design

Chapter Preview

The focus of the chapter is to illuminate the research methodology employed in the study. A qualitative research approach was used with single case study and the method used in the study was psychobiography. The researcher also describes how data trustworthiness was addressed in the study. As the researcher I considered it important to acknowledge past and present critique against psychobiography as a research method and how it was addressed in the study. Lastly, the researcher describes how he selected the subject and how the data were collected and analyzed.

4.1 Research Method

This study on the life of Friedrich Nietzsche may be described as psychobiographical research with a qualitative single-case research design (Yin, 2003). More specifically, the research design may be viewed as a psychobiographical study of a single case over a life span. Psychobiography serves as a means of enquiry into an individual case through the systematic use of psychological theory to transform a life into a coherent and illuminated story (McAdams, 1988). Psychobiography is not just a method of scientific inquiry but a way of practicing psychology and a method whereby researchers can gain significant insights by studying an individual (Elms, 1994).

The research method that is utilised in this study can be described as qualitative-morphogenic (Elms, 1994). This method emphasises the individuality of the whole person instead of the individuality encountered in single elements (Runyan, 1988a). The life of the subject is also described qualitatively within a particular systemic setting (McAdams, 1988). The ‘qualitative morphogenic’ element emphasises the importance of how all factors pertaining to a person’s life make up the individual, therefore, psychobiographers seek to be contextually sensitive when studying a finished life.
4.2 Ethical Considerations

As with any scientific research there are ethical implications that the researcher must consider and apply to a study. Runyan (1988a) mentions that invasion of privacy and embarrassment or harm to the subject and relatives are the primary ethical issues concerning psychobiographical research. These issues will have an effect on how the research is conducted, the data collected and how the findings of the study are disseminated to the research community and public at large.

The American Psychiatric Association in 1976 set out guidelines for conducting ethically approved psychobiographical research. This was done due to a shortage of psychobiographical research. These guidelines set out by the APA are still adhered to today. These guidelines are set out as follows by Elms (1994):

- Psychobiographies should preferably be conducted on finished lives and those who can be seen as long-dead. This can minimize the research from causing embarrassment to close relatives by unsavory research findings.
- If a psychobiography is conducted on a living person, the person under study must have given written consent to being studied, interviewed and written up for publication.

As the aforementioned guidelines make no reference to confidentiality, Elms (1994) prescribed that all sensitive information obtained by psychobiographers should be treated and documented with the necessary ethical respect.

Each of the above-mentioned ethical considerations was considered in the current study of Nietzsche’s life. To guard against possible violation of privacy and confidentiality, only published and publically available data were used in the data collection process. The researcher also endeavoured to treat all data obtained concerning Nietzsche’s life with the necessary respect and empathy. The aim of the study was to explore and describe Nietzsche’s development as a person by applying a psychological theory to Nietzsche’s life. Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person provided the researcher a non-pathological lens to examine Nietzsche’s life, thereby upholding and adhering to the aim of the study.
4.3 Research Subject

The study is a psychobiography, with the subject having been selected via purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher to select a case that provides experiences which will aid in developing an idea (Berg, 1995). Case studies or psychobiographies, as in this case, are typically directed at gaining an understanding of the individual’s uniqueness in all its complexity (Elms, 1994; McAdams, 1994). The psychological study of individuals’ perceived greatness provides the psychobiographer with a scientific approach to understand why and how certain individuals develop into creative men and women (Howe, 1997). Smuts (2009) noted that the results yielded from the study of an individual should also enable some feature of a theory to be confirmed or refuted. As previously mentioned I, as researcher, have utilized Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. Furthermore, I selected Friedrich Nietzsche as the research subject on the basis of my personal interest in his existential/humanistic philosophy and how it has contributed to my development as a person and as a humanist thinker, his prominence as a philosopher, and because of his ambition to live an authentic life.

4.4 Preliminary Methodological Considerations

Due to the critique launched against psychobiography as a scientifically valid and reliable research method, as highlighted by authors such as Anderson (1981); Guba and Lincoln (1985); Neuman (2006); Rolfe (2006); Runyan (1988b) and Schultz (2005), the following factors were taken into consideration in embarking on this study of the life of Nietzsche; trustworthiness in psychobiography, reductionism, researcher bias, cross-cultural influences, analyzing a finished life and overgeneralization. These are significant methodological considerations that were addressed in the current study and should also be considered in future psychobiographies. The fundamental importance of addressing these methodological factors is to uphold the scientific quality and trustworthiness of the study.

4.4.1 Trustworthiness in Psychobiography

Runyan (1988b) identified a lack of controls in the conduct of qualitative research while Rolfe (2006) discussed the ongoing debate surrounding validity or the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Rolfe further urged that acknowledgement must be given to the ongoing debate between the quantitative-qualitative continuum and that it is futile for researchers to determine quality assurance criteria for qualitative research. In maximizing the
rigor of the current study, I, as psychobiographer, considered both the preliminary methodological considerations and trustworthiness in the design and methodology of the study.

Qualitative researchers have faced criticism within the scientific community in the past and present concerning the assurance of trustworthiness of research (Pather, 2005). Pather (2005) concluded that qualitative research is based on different ‘postulations of reality’ and should have dissimilar conceptions of validity and reliability compared to a quantitative research framework (p.25). Sandelowski (1993 as cited in Rolfe, 2006) argued that the issue of reliability and validity in qualitative research should not be linked to the quantitative concepts of truth or value but to trustworthiness, which becomes a process whereby the research process is made transparent to the reader in the form of an audit trail. As researcher, my aim was to be transparent in the design and implementation of the study. This transparency or audit trail will enable the reader to track and audit how the research process took place. Neuman (2006) portrays trustworthiness in qualitative research as dependability or the consistency of research. Furthermore, psychobiographers are aware of the potential limitation of working with a research subject over a long period of time and how this process may impact on the reliability of research (Neuman, 2006).

As part of the research methodology the researcher sought to address both the preliminary methodological considerations and the issue of trustworthiness of the data and results of the study (Neuman, 2006). Qualitative research has a lack of controls in methodology, as mentioned by Runyan (1988a), and also not having a non-unified theory, that can collectively describe qualitative research (Rolfe, 2006). Thus, in contrast to the quantitative control measures, authors such as Guba and Lincoln (1985) have proposed a set of controls that qualitative researchers should consider to ensure a trustworthy research. Guba and Lincoln (date), have divided trustworthiness into the following factors: (a) *Credibility* which roughly relates to the quantitative factor of internal-validity; (b) *Dependability* which relates more to reliability; (c) *Transferability* which is a form of external validity and; (d) *Conformability* which is mainly related to the presentation of the study. The researcher has sought to adopt and adhere to the four criteria concerning trustworthiness of the psychobiography, as identified by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and expanded on by Shenton (2004).
4.4.1.1 Credibility

Shenton (2004) stated that the credibility of a research study is a test or examination of what is intended to be tested – the research process adhered to the research aim of the study. Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Shenton, 2004) argue that credibility of a study is one of the most important factors to ensure trustworthiness. In addressing credibility of the study, I attempted to exhibit a true representation of the subject under scrutiny by means of a data collection and analysis grid. The grid is explained further in section 4.5 below in the chapter.

4.4.1.2 Dependability

According to Shenton (2004), the issue of assessing reliability of a study by means of a quantitative method becomes problematic for qualitative researchers due to the "changing nature of phenomena under scrutiny" (p.71), as the quantitative researcher accepts that if the same steps are taken the same result would be achieved. Guba and Lincoln (1985) emphasized the close ties between credibility and dependability of a trustworthy study. Adhering to the factor of dependability within research, I aimed to exhibit and illustrate the research design transparently in order to highlight how the data were collected and analysed by the researcher. This will enable the reader to track the research process and enable future researchers to repeat or expand on the study.

4.4.1.3 Transferability

Shenton (2004) cautioned scholars regarding transferability in qualitative research. In contrast to quantitative research, results in a qualitative study cannot easily be applied or transferred to a different population or context due to context-sensitivity and the amount of different variables to be considered. To enable transferability, I provided sufficient detail of the context of the subject for the reader to determine whether the findings can be generalized to other contexts. The data collection and analysis grid enabled, me, as researcher, to collect contextual data relating to the era in which Nietzsche lived.

4.4.1.4 Conformability

It is important to acknowledge that I am firstly a person and then a researcher. As a person, my own subjective experiences and influences are an important factor in conducting scientific research. Miles and Huberman (as cited in Shenton, 2004) consider it an important aspect that in terms of conformability the researcher admits his or her own subjectivity. The researcher has therefore explained and reflected on the research process through the keeping
of a research journal where he noted his subjective experience during the study. In the final chapter the reflexivity of the researcher is discussed in order to acknowledge this aspect of the methodology and how decisions were taken (Shenton, 2004).

4.4.2 Reductionism

Schultz (2005) mentions the prevalence of reductionism in psychobiographical research as another drawback to maintaining the scientific integrity of psychobiography. Schultz states that “reductionism reduces to explaining a lot by way of a very little; in fact, psychobiography works best when it does exactly the opposite” (p.12), being descriptive or exploratory. In addition, psychobiographical studies have been said to focus on pathological processes rather than normality and health (Runyan, 1988b). As suggested by Anderson (1981b) and Howe (1997), subjects should be regarded in their holistic complexity. Runyan (1988b) added that the behaviour of adults in past psychobiographies was generally viewed through early childhood experiences with disregard to later developmental influences.

In order to minimize the influence of reductionism the following precautionary measures were utilized in the study. Firstly, Nietzsche’s life was comprehensively explored by utilizing a data collection and analysis grid, which provided the researcher with a comprehensive framework to view Nietzsche’s life within all the different systems of his life. Secondly, multiple data sources depicting Nietzsche’s life, for example, the educational, political, cultural and social contexts were utilized in an attempt to minimize reductionism. Thirdly, Runyan (1988b) cautions researchers against scientific or ‘esoteric psychological jargon’. The data collected in the study is available to the public and is suitable for the layperson to comprehend. The approach of the researcher regarding Nietzsche’s life was ‘eugraphic’ and not ‘pathographic’ as previously mentioned in the ethical considerations of the study and research proposal (Elms, 1994; Schultz, 2005). Despite Nietzsche’s mental breakdown in the latter of half of his life, the researcher’s aim was to explore Nietzsche’s development as a person according to Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person and not to focus on the “pathographic” detail of his life.

4.4.3 Researcher Bias

Neuman (2006) mentions that opportunities for being unethical and dishonest can occur in various forms of scientific research. Furthermore, Neuman highlights that the intimate relationship that qualitative researchers have with their subjects and data sources
does not necessarily mean biased research but can be an opportunity to reach personal insights and understanding of the research subject. Possible characteristics of researcher bias are idealizing or degrading the research subject (Anderson, 1981a). In order to safeguard against the possible tendency of the researcher being disparaging or too optimistic toward the subject, the researcher should make every effort to develop empathic understanding of the research subject (Anderson, 1981a).

Following Anderson (1981a; 1981b) steps were taken in order to minimize the threat of researcher bias. A record of the researcher’s thoughts and feelings relating to the subject and the research process was kept by means of a research journal. This was done in order to examine and reflect on the research process over time and how it influenced the researcher’s opinion and writing about Nietzsche’s life. In order to protect against the possibility of being disparaging toward Nietzsche, the researcher consulted various sources concerning Nietzsche’s life, discussed his research journal entries with his supervisor, sent memos to himself reminding him of the research question, the ‘eugraphic’ approach of the study, and adopted a scientific and non-sensationalist style of conducting the psychobiographical study. These measures made it possible to develop an empathetic understanding of Nietzsche’s development as a person and not as a supporter or detractor of his philosophy. As researcher, it was important to consult with knowledgeable individuals, such as fellow researchers and academics on the life of Nietzsche. Various biographies on Nietzsche were consulted: Hollingdale (1965), Young (2010), and also Nietzsche’s own quasi-autobiography, Ecce Homo (1888). The above-mentioned steps enabled the researcher to focus on maintaining an objective view of Nietzsche’s life and to reduce potential researcher bias within the study.

4.4.4 Cross-Cultural Influence

Anderson (1981) mentions the possible limitation of cross-cultural influences and that psychobiographers should be culturally cognizant if the subject is not their contemporary. Anderson also states that psychological concepts and theories used in psychobiographical research are not always applicable to the subject under study and may not be cross-culturally sensitive. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3 regarding the theoretical framework, the theory used in the current study is person centered in nature. Rogers himself was cognizant of the impact of cross-cultural factors when attempting to understand an individual. Rogers (1961) said that: ‘We fail to see that we are evaluating the person from our own, or from some fairly general, frame of reference, but that the only way to understand his behavior
meaningfully is to understand it as he perceives it himself, just as the only way to understand another culture is to assume the frame of reference of that culture’ (cited in MacDougall, p.48, 2002). In order to reduce the impact of this criticism the two steps suggested by Anderson (1981a), were taken into action.

The researcher acknowledged and was cognizant throughout the study that the ecosystemic context in which Nietzsche lived was different to the researcher’s current ecosystemic context. The political, economic and more specifically the religious eras that Nietzsche experienced were significantly different to the current era and are explored and described in greater detail in the chapter on his life where the researcher engaged in in-depth exploration of Nietzsche’s ecosystemic context including the cultural and religious era in which he lived. This enabled the researcher to develop a contextual understanding of the challenges Nietzsche faced concerning the religious, economic, political and social contexts of his time. Furthermore, the utilization of the data collection and analysis grid enabled the researcher to view and map Nietzsche’s life.

4.4.5 Analyzing a Finished Life

I, as the researcher, am aware of the criticism of analyzing a finished life, as most of the biographical data is thinly scattered, rather than dealing directly with a living person (Smuts, 2009). In psychobiography’s defense, Anderson (1981a) highlighted that when studying an absent subject a variety of information sources should be utilized, such as, primary sources (material produced by Nietzsche) and secondary sources (material produced on Nietzsche).

Anderson (1981a) recommended an alternative route for psychobiographers to employ when conducting research on a finished life. Psychobiographers should consult and assimilate a number of different perspectives by authors, biographers and other knowledgeable persons regarding the research subject. Authors such as Jackson (2011); Young (2010); Large (2007); and Mann (2006) have published notable material on Nietzsche’s life, his philosophies and contribution to society as a thinker. Different perspectives have been adopted by authors on Nietzsche’s life and his philosophy: there are authors in support of Nietzsche’s philosophical disposition concerning morality, life and how a person should strive towards living an authentic life, and there are authors that critique Nietzsche’s philosophical inappropriate style of writing and the lack of structure concerning his philosophy. Analyzing a finished life may hold a particular set of obstacles and
limitations for psychobiographers but in the researchers’ opinion there are also certain ethical
difficulties in studying living subjects. Aspects such as (a) informed consent; (b) right to
withdraw; (c) debriefing; (d) confidentiality and anonymity; (e) safety and protection and (f)
respect for your subjects must be considered when conducting research on living subjects
(Bell, 2005; Oliver, 2003).

4.4.6 Overgeneralization

Neuman (2006) describes the limitation of overgeneralization in a research study as
applying a minute amount of evidence to a broader scenario which is not justified, implying
that researchers must be mindful of the scope and limitations of a study. The limitations of
the current study are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. In order to avoid
overgeneralization, psychobiographical researchers should keep in mind that findings are
speculative and are based on psychological theory (Anderson, 1981b). Although the current
researcher acknowledges that the study was based primarily on Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of
the fully functioning person, he was mindful of this concern and addressed it by utilizing the
aforementioned data collection grid and data analysis grid to record relevant evidence on
which the findings are based.

4.5 Choosing a Theory

I chose to apply Carl Rogers’ theory of personality to examine the life of Friedrich
Nietzsche. It is the researchers’ opinion that the selection of an appropriate theory is of great
importance to the credibility of a study. Elms (2005) highlighted the difficulty
psychobiographer’s face when ‘choosing’ a correct or an appropriate theoretical framework.
Elms, based on his psychobiographical experience, suggested that the subject should choose
you as psychobiographer, to be cautious and to not let your subject lead you astray and to
always be ready to change theories midstream. Elms (1994) also highlighted the mutual
relationship and common interest that exists and evolves between subject and
psychobiographer.

Past psychobiographies have been ‘pathographic’ in approach and were primarily
based on psychoanalytical theory (Elms, 1994). I focussed on the personality development of
Nietzsche; therefore, using a humanistic personality theory appeared to be an appropriate
choice. I decided to make use of Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person as the
primary aim of the study was to describe and explore Nietzsche’s psychological development as a person, making the study ‘eugraphic’ (Elms, 1994) and Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person provided me with the necessary theoretical framework whereby I could apply and attempt to identify specific healthy dimensions in Nietzsche’s personality.

The following section focuses on how the data has been collected that have explored by the above-mentioned theory of Carl Rogers’ (1961) fully functioning person.

4.6 Data Collection

Data collected for this study were obtained from several sources including primary document(s) (a document produced by the subject, such as Nietzsche’s personal quasi-autobiography, *Ecce Homo* (first published in 1889) and secondary source(s) (documents produced by other authors) such as those of Young (2010) and Hollingdale (1965). As Yin (2003) purports, multiple sources of data enhance the reliability and validity of the information collected. This is because published data are stable resources that can be frequently and repeatedly reviewed and allow for cross-referencing of biographical information.

A data collection and analysis grid (see Appendix 1), was developed to collate and analyse all the relevant data on Nietzsche’s life. The grid includes a chronological order and the different qualities of Rogers’ (1961) theory to analyze Nietzsche’s development chronologically, systematically, and transparently. It is worth mentioning that the use of the developmental stages purely served as a data organizational tool and not as a theoretical tool to analyze Nietzsche’s life.

Secondly, only certain aspects of Alexander’s (1988) ‘nine identifiers of salience’ were used in collecting relevant data from Nietzsche’s life in a transparent and replicable manner. Alexander (1988) reported that the primary concern in psychobiography is to extract the most meaningful units of personality structure and development from the productions of an individual. The data collection and analysis grid also enhanced the dependability and consistency of auditing the data collection process. The data collection of the study consists of three components:

- Data that was generally relevant, primary and emphasized within published literature.
- Data relevant to the chronological growth and psychosocial development of the subject.
Data that illustrated contextual aspects of the subject’s life. The historical and sociocultural era of the subject’s life and how it may have influenced the subject’s personality development.

4.7 Data Analysis

Yin (2003) described the analysis of case study data as a process of examining, extracting, categorising, and the recombining of evidence. He further stated that every investigation should start with a general analytical strategy – yielding priorities of what to analyse. He proposed relying on a theoretical proposition on which the original objective and design of the case study was presumably based. Such a proposition in turn reflects a set of research questions that can provide insight into the objective of the study and the content of the theoretical approach. As mentioned earlier the data collection and analysis grid enabled the researcher to systematically and transparently analyse all the relevant data collected on the life of Nietzsche.

Alexander (1988) proposed two major strategies, similar to the strategy of Yin (2003), for the analysis of personal data: (a) letting the data reveal themselves, and (b) asking the data questions. I only made use of certain Alexander’s strategy to analyse the case study data collected on the life of Friedrich Nietzsche. The nature of the questions asked was based on Rogers’ (1961) dimensions of the fully functioning person, for example:

Question 1: Are there any indicators of ‘existential living’ concerning Nietzsche as an adolescent?

Question 2: Did Nietzsche display any signs of ‘creativity’ as a child?

The above-mentioned questions enabled me to use the data analysis and collection grid in attempting to identify whether or not any evidence existed, thus being able to formulate a relatively conclusive analysis on Nietzsche’s life. The data collection and analysis grid (Appendix 1) consists of the components that comprise Rogers’ fully functioning person (1961) organised in terms of chronological developmental stages.

4.8 Conclusion

I explored and discussed the methodology and research design utilized in the study. As researcher, it was my aim to ensure that all necessary steps were addressed to ensure the
trustworthiness of the study as discussed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Shenton (2004). Criticisms were acknowledged and addressed in the preliminary methodological considerations of the study. The following chapter reports on the biographical data collected on the life of Friedrich Nietzsche.
CHAPTER 5
The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche

Chapter Preview

This chapter aims to present a condensed construction of Friedrich Nietzsche’s life. The researcher developed and made use of a data collection and analysis grid, as described in Chapter 4, to gather relevant data concerning Nietzsche’s life. Secondly, the researcher made use of headings such as, The childhood years, The school boy, The student, The professor, to name a few, in order to cluster periods of Nietzsche’s life. These headings have been used by notable biographers such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010) to structure Nietzsche’s life.

5.1 The Childhood Years

Nietzsche was born on the 15th October 1844, in a small village named Röcken, a municipality in the district of Saxony, a very small village of a population of close to 200 (Jackson, 2011). His birthday was also that of the reigning King Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, at the time, of who Pastor Ludwig Nietzsche was a great admirer. As a result Nietzsche was named Friedrich Wilhelm after the king. Pastor Ludwig and Franziska Nietzsche had two further children: a daughter, Elizabeth, who was born on 10th July 1846, and a second son, Joseph, who was born in February 1848 and died in infancy. The Nietzsche ancestry legend was that they were of Polish decent; the forebears were Protestants escaping from the Catholic persecution in their homeland to Germany. Hollingdale (1965) mentions that Nietzsche stuck to the family legend concerning his ancestry despite historical evidence suggesting the Nietzsches are of German ancestry. This ancestry has been traced back to more than 200 years ago. Most of his family members were small tradesmen and there are no records of aristocratic class membership (Hollingdale, 1965). The Nietzsche’s became more involved in the church and, according to Young (2010), Ludwig, was a superintendent in the Lutheran church and a writer of treatises on moral and theological subjects. Furthermore, as Young purports, Nietzsche’s mother, Franziska, was the daughter of David Ernest Oehler, a pastor in the nearby village of Probles. Nietzsche was thus born into a family of the Lutheran belief. Nietzsche was very religious as a child and would recite various scriptures to his family and friends. Jackson (2011) states that it is believed that Nietzsche had a happy childhood and there appeared to be no signs of rebellion in his writings; on the contrary, he
was more of a conformist (Jackson, 2011). Nietzsche’s adult life, and philosophical work, reflects a significant renunciation of the Christian environment he grew up in. His polemic against Christianity has contributed widely to his reputation as a distastefully problematic philosopher (Hollingdale, 1965; Large, 2007; Young, 2010).

The first five years of Nietzsche’s childhood have been described as ‘paradise’ (p.8.) spent in the countryside surrounded by nature Hollingdale (1965). He described Nietzsche’s childhood as undisturbed by the events of the outside world, where the young Nietzsche spent his summers by ponds and willow trees with very little knowledge of what was happening in adjacent towns or villages (Hollingdale, 1965). The town of Röcken was unmarked by the revolutionary activities of 1848 and 1849 in Germany. The revolution of this time was underpinned by discontent from the masses concerning the autocratic rule of the German confederation of the time (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s household consisted mostly of females; his mother, sister and two aunts, which resulted in Nietzsche been well taken care of as a child (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011; Young, 2010).

The idyllic environment wherein the young Nietzsche spent the first five years of his life came to an abrupt end with the death of his beloved father, Ludwig Nietzsche in 1849 at the age of 36 (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011; Young, 2010). The following year Nietzsche’s younger brother, Joseph, passed away in infancy and the family existence that Nietzsche once knew, was shattered. The cause of death of Nietzsches’ father has been unclear for some time but it is commonly believed that he died from “softening of the brain caused by a fall from a flight of steps”. However, a forensic autopsy revealed that a quarter of his brain was missing (Hollingdale, 1965 p.12; Young, 2010). The significant impact that Nietzsche’s father had on his life can be seen in his writing. At the age of five Nietzsche recalled that “although I [Nietzsche] was very young and inexperienced, I still had some idea of death: the thought that I would be separated for ever from my dear father seized me and I wept bitterly” (Young, 2010, p.9). Furthermore, Young states that ‘though he [Nietzsche] was only five years old, the loss marked him for life” (p. 9.), and in one of Nietzsche’s writings he considered himself to have become a “fatherless orphan” that also lacked a sense of security (p.9.). Nietzsche managed to obtain a considerable amount of money from a court settlement with his publisher and bought an engraved tombstone – 36 years later – for his father Ludwig with the inscription from St. Paul, “Love never faileth” (Cor, 13, 8) (Young,
2010, p.9). It is clear that the young Nietzsche had a deep love and appreciation for his father Ludwig and that the death of his father brought about a change in Nietzsche’s life.

During a period of 2 years the family suffered two major tragedies. The family had to vacate the vicarage of the late Pastor Ludwig Nietzsche in April 1850 to welcome the new successor to the vicarage (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). The family moved to the new walled town of Naumburg, not too far from Röcken (Jackson, 2011). Naumburg was no different to Röcken. It was an old cathedral town with calm and relaxed community life. However, the young Nietzsche still had to adapt to the slightly bigger town (Jackson, 2011; Young, 2010). Young (2010) recalls Nietzsche’s sadness on leaving their countryside residence for the town of Naumburg and that he distastefully observed that not all residents of Naumburg were acquainted with each other. Nietzsche appeared not to be very welcome in the new environment (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s two aunts also passed away in 1855, leaving only his mother, Franziska and a younger sister, Elizabeth. Fortunately the family of three had the financial means to sustain themselves in Naumburg (Jackson, 2011). Young (2010) noted that Nietzsche eventually came to terms with his new environment and settled in his new hometown. The arduous time after the loss of his father and relocating to a different town left a “scar” on the young Nietzsche, and despite him having adapted to Naumburg, he still yearned “for the security of a recovered homeland” which “remained an undertone throughout Nietzsche’s life” (Young, 2010, p. 12.). Young (2010) mentioned a possible factor that could have assisted the young Nietzsche and the rest of the family to adapt to Naumburg was the town’s religious atmosphere. This, as Nietzsche’s sister, Elizabeth, described it, was a “thoroughly Christian conservative town, loyal to the King and a pillar to Throne and Church” (p.13.).

5.2 The School Boy

Shortly after arriving in Naumburg, Nietzsche was sent to the local boy’s school, Knaben-Bürgerschule, which were a public and not a private school. Nietzsche’s grandmother Erdmunthe had the idea that children from all the different classes should attend the same school until the age of ten in order to provide a multi-social or multi-classist learning environment from which children could benefit (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s earliest schoolboy friends were his cousins Gustav Krug and Wilhelm Pinder. Nietzsche at age 14 received a prestigious scholarship to enrol at the prestigious school, Pforta, to which these
two cousins also transferred despite Erdmunthe’s noble intentions of exposing young Nietzsche to a multi-classist environment.

Hollingdale (1965) describes Pforta as a strict school; the school had a set daily routine from 04:00 to 21:00 for its pupils. This was also was bed time. Pforta executed a peculiar sense of control, similar to a prison system, over its pupils. Nietzsche’s first four months at Pforta were filled with a great deal of homesickness. He wanted to return home but found help from one of his tutors who assisted him during his initial months at Pforta.

The heart of the school’s curriculum rested in Greek and Latin and not as much on the German classics (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). The students of Pforta lived in a world of modern European literature but that of Greece and Rome – the pupils did not focus on German literature. There was a lesser emphasis on natural science and mathematics, resulting in Nietzsche not being stimulated enough in mathematics and nearly failing his final examination (Young, 2010). It is believed that the curriculum of Pforta played a role in Nietzsche becoming a professor of classical philology (Hollingdale, 1965). Jackson (2011) mentions that Nietzsche was a studious schoolboy, had a good physical posture and took part in a variety of physical activities such as swimming, skating and walking. According to Young (2010) it was during Nietzsche’s early school career that signs of his frail health appeared. Nietzsche was plagued by blinding headaches that would stay with him for the rest of his life. Nietzsche’s frail health and headaches can possibly be linked to his short-sightedness and the large amount of reading he did as a child (Jackson, 2011). Despite Nietzsche’s self-discipline and diligence as a student, his frail health caused him to be absent from school and having to catch-up on his school work.

Nietzsche, together with two of his Naumburg friends established their own musical and literary society-Gerrmania - under the leadership of the young Nietzsche himself. They met on a regular basis to recite their individual work; Nietzsche’s earliest philosophical work ‘Fate and History’ originated from the Germania society. The society came to an end in July 1863 due to pressures of schoolwork and other miscellaneous activities the boys needed to attend to (Young, 2010).

Nietzsche’s childhood was marked by a salient element of religious piety and conformism. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche’s “attitude towards the Bible was one of unqualified belief” (p.28.). However, this was soon to become a belief of the past. Through Nietzsche’s engagement with various scholarly texts of people such as Friedrich Hölderin (1770 - 1843) and Lord Byron (1788 - 1824), he started to gain insight into the principles of
Nietzsche’s religious doubt was not the only change that took place during the adolescent years of his life. According to Hollingdale (1965), during puberty the exemplary pupil began to display some unruly behaviour. During 1862 Nietzsche began to socialise with newfound friends, Guido Meyer and Raimund Granier, and often ended up in some sort of trouble with school authorities. Together they took part in drinking, smoking and making fun of the more diligent students, contrary to the behaviour of a Pforta pupil (Young, 2010). Meyer was expelled from Pforta due to his unruly behaviour and continuous transgression of school conduct. This event, as Nietzsche described it in a letter to his mother, Franziska, was Nietzsche’s saddest day at Pforta (Hollingdale, 1965).

According to Hollingdale (1965) Nietzsche’s rebellion came to a climax on 14 April a Sunday, which was their day off. Nietzsche together with another student, named Richter, went to the railway station where they drank four pints of beer each. On their way back to school they had the misfortune to encounter a teacher, who was ashamed to see Nietzsche drunk and the other student even more so (Hollingdale, 1965). Subsequently, Nietzsche ceased to be a school prefect and wrote to his mother that he had no excuse and would pull himself together. According to Young (2010) one of Nietzsche’s reasons for being drunk was to celebrate being the top achiever in the year end examinations. Furthermore, Young (2010) mentioned that Nietzsche’s rebellion came to an end in April 1863, or rather, that there are no records at Pforta that reflect any misdemeanour under his name. Aside from Nietzsche’s social rebellion, he also developed a literary or intellectual rebellion and showed an interest in the work of Lord Byron (Young, 2010). According to Young (2010) is it worth noting that despite Nietzsche’s male friends he did have an interest in the opposite sex. He was attracted to Anna Redtel, the sister of a school acquaintance, to whom he dedicated a collection of his early musical compositions and piano pieces.

During Nietzsche’s final year at Pforta, at the age of 20, he was faced with the task of choosing a profession. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche had difficulty in choosing a profession and considered music, as he was passionate about music but eventually succumbed to what Pforta conditioned all its pupils to aspire to, both by training and ideology, the classics – ‘classical philology’ (p.31.). Hollingdale (1965) argued that this
decision was also based on Nietzsche’s mother’s influence who wanted him to become a pastor like his ancestors.

When the end of Nietzsche’s school career at Pforta drew near, he also had to bid farewell to his dear friends, Pinder and Gustav, as they were bound for university in Heidelberg, which did not offer classical philology (Young, 2010). However, Nietzsche initiated two new friendships with Paul Deussen and Baron Carl van Gersdorff, based on their common interests in aesthetics, literature and music (Young, 2010).

Young (2010) states that Nietzsche left Pforta on September 7, 1864, adjudged the finest pupil for many years. Nietzsche seemed to have a brilliant future ahead of him based on his superb academic and intellectual capabilities. Despite the promising future awaiting Nietzsche, he was still plagued by the frail health which hampered his school attendance.

As a child born into a religious family with religious ancestry and which displayed a deep commitment to the Christian faith, Nietzsche had a wavering belief in the tenets of the Bible (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Young (2010) states that Nietzsche’s religious doubt began during his years at Pforta, where, on 24 March 1861, to an audience of two in the Germania society the 17 year old delivered a lecture on the ‘The Childhood of Peoples’ (p.33.). This lecture was the start of Nietzsche’s increasing sceptic meditation on religion. Hollingdale (1965) suggested that the Nietzsche who had left Pforta for university was ‘already himself’ (p.32.) and therefore it could be argued that the foundation of his philosophical disposition was evident during his schoolboy years at Pforta.

5.3 The Student

The next chapter of Nietzsche’s life started at Bonn University where he enrolled to study classical philology. Bonn had a distinguished reputation for its philology department with notable philologists such as Otto Jahn (1813-1869) and Friedrich Ritschl (1806-1876) (Young, 2010). Nietzsche also had a friend at Bonn, Paul Deussen, with whom he started his university career (Young, 2010).

After having endured the monastic confines of Pforta, the new found freedom at university was welcomed with great appreciation and excitement. Young (2010) mentions Nietzsche’s insight into his experiences at Pforta where he wrote to a friend who was still at Pforta that “one must experience constraint in order to be able to savour freedom” (p.51). During the first two weeks of the holiday before attending university, Nietzsche and Deussen
embarked on a Rhineland holiday trip. Hollingdale (1965) mentioned that the two friends indulged in a moderate amount of horse-play and wine-drinking. Nietzsche also enjoyed a brief flirtation with Deussen’s sister, Marie (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

Both Nietzsche and Deussen enrolled at Bonn University on 16 October 1864 (Hollingdale, 1965). According to Young (2010) Nietzsche’s mother, Franziska, struggled to cover all of his accommodation expenses and took two weeks to raise his enrolment fee. Nietzsche was constantly short of cash to pay for his room as was witnessed in his letters to his mother (Young, 2010). Despite Nietzsche’s financial constraints which added to his hardship, he indulged in student parties and many beer drinking evenings in the local pubs. This led to Nietzsche joining a student fraternity – the Franconia (Young, 2010). Hollingdale (1965) described the Franconia as a student union with a political vision to unite all German universities in an attempt to bring about a liberal and united Germany. However, the fraternity’s political inclination lessened in 1860 and it became characterised solely by social activities (Hollingdale, 1965). Hollingdale (1965) highlights that although Nietzsche did get drunk with his fellow Franconians he was not always in favour of the group’s over-indulgence but instead preferred to indulge in sweet cakes. During his time as a member in the Franconia he also demonstrated his musical capabilities and took part in a duel as most members did. Young (2010) states that Deussen, Nietzsche’s friend, witnessed the event and accounted that his duel with an acquaintance from another fraternity lasted merely three minutes. Nietzsche survived the duel but was left with a scar on the bridge of his nose that remained there for the rest of his life (Hollingdale, 1965, Young, 2010).

In addition to the beer drinking and occasional duels, members of the Franconia also chased after girls. Different testimonies by Nietzsche’s sister Elizabeth and Deussen reveal that Nietzsche displayed little interest in engaging in sexual relations with the opposite sex (Young, 2010). However, Young (2010) states that Nietzsche did visit brothels in Leipzig and Naples and the local brothel in Cologne, a half an hour up the Rhine from Bonn. It was and may still be commonly believed that Nietzsche contracted syphilis during his visits to the brothels (Hollingdale, 1965).

Nietzsche’s newfound freedom as a university student did not merely consist of beer-drinking but he also paid attention to his studies. Nietzsche had to study a certain amount of theology and was introduced to the world of new opinions and criticism. The German theologian and writer, David Strauss (1808 - 1874), caught Nietzsche’s attention (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s, who was then more critical than before in his approach to biblical texts
was stimulated by Strauss’ book, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, first published in 1835-6. Strauss’ interest was in how the disciples’ depiction of Jesus’ life was historically inaccurate and that the gospels were “exercises in myth making” (p.56.)

Young (2010) states that it was evident in the theological essays that Nietzsche submitted, although some were incomplete due to his continuous beer-drinking, that he was not a believer but an external observer. Hollingdale (1965) argued that Nietzsche’s belief in Christianity and the validity of religion was extinct when he left Pforta and abandoned the study of theology at Bonn. He mentions that when Nietzsche returned home for an Easter vacation he informed his mother about his decision to abandon Christianity and the study of theology. This decision was not taken light-heartedly and resulted in tears and allegations. Ironically, his mother put her trust in God, and based on the belief that God directs all that we do, she accepted his newfound approach to existence (Hollingdale, 1965). It is worth noting that Nietzsche’s sister Elizabeth was angered by her brother’s decision to abandon the religion of their fathers and forefathers (Hollingdale, 1965). However, it was clear that he would not fulfill the career paths of his father and forefathers.

Nietzsche’s time at Bonn was short lived; he left Bonn on the 17th of August 1865. His decision to leave Bonn, according Young (2010), was partly due to his financial constraints but mainly because he followed Friedrich Ritschl, one of his philology professors, whom he admired as a young student of philology (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s preparations to start afresh in Leipzig were accompanied by his perpetual frail health which had an increasingly negative effect on his personal and professional career. Nietzsche attended the inaugural lecture of Ritschl and soon formed a philology society, under the tutelage of Friedrich Ritschl himself (Hollingdale, 1965). He submitted a paper on ‘The last Redaction of Theognis’ to Ritschl for commentary. Within a few days Ritschl summoned Nietzsche to his office regarding the potential Ritschl saw in him as a student (Hollingdale, 1965, p.41.). Ritschl was so taken by Nietzsche’s academic ability that he was convinced of his future success as a philologist. Nietzsche became Ritschl’s protégé (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 1965). Ritschl recommended young Nietzsche for a vacant professorship at Basel University after he received his doctorate at Leipzig University without any formal examination. He became a professor at the age of twenty-four (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

Aside from Nietzsche’s academic success at Leipzig he also experienced good health, something that he greatly appreciated. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche’s time at Leipzig
could have been the happiest time of his life. He had success academically and had no ailments such as headaches, vomiting and gastric problems. Young refers to the common stereotype biographers have made to conceptualise Nietzsche as the ‘romantic loner’ (p.64.), even though he only became so in the latter part of his life. It is important to know that his Leipzig years were happy years.

5.4 War, Politics and Military Service

Amidst Nietzsche’s time as a university student, initially at University of Bonn, and, then moving to Leipzig University, the dark cloud of war and politics was ever-present (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Bismarck (1815 - 1898) at the time was preparing for war against Austria, which Nietzsche favoured to give rise to a new German state. Bismarck became prime minister of Prussia in 1862 and believed that all German states could be unified under new Prussian leadership but at the expense of the Austrian people (Young, 2010). On June 14, 1866, the Austrians mobilised their defences against the looming threat of Bismarck, and on the following day the Prussian forces invaded Saxony and Hanover Hesse. Young (2010) states, that the German revolution could also have been a war against the Northern Protestants and Southern Catholics. On July 3, 1866, the Austrians suffered a major defeat to the Prussian forces at Königgrätz and this ushered in the Northern German Federation with the Prussian King as head and Bismarck as the driving force (Young, 2010). The new found Prussian leadership would, five years after the defeat of the Austrians at Königgrätz, become the nucleus of the German Reich, with the Prussian King as Emperor and Bismarck as Chancellor (Young, 2010).

Nietzsche who was an ardent supporter of the Prussians and Bismarck was pleased by the revolutionary successes of the Prussians. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche’s attraction to Bismarck, and war at large, was due to his boyish nature of seeing war as a heroic adventure. But there was more to the adventure of war that intrigued the young Nietzsche. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche viewed the princely rule of the German states as oppressive; hence he was in favour of their abolishment and the establishment of a unified Germany (2010).

Bismarck’s Prussia had a significant resemblance to Pforta in terms of a disciplinary society governed by rules and regulations. Considering the revolutionary events that occurred, according to Young (2010) Nietzsche ‘[was]... fully absorbed by the culture of his time and place’ (p.73): Nietzsche was entranced by the zeitgeist of the revolutionary time.
Thus it is of no surprise that Nietzsche volunteered for service but was rejected due to his short-sightedness.

The state demanded civil obedience and adherence to authority and the fatherland (Young, 2010). The army focussed on the physical structure of its rookies by enforcing physical exercise. Nietzsche had to re-learn how to ride a horse military style and according to Young (2010) “Nietzsche was often taken for a retired army officer” due to his physical constrains the military training had on him (Young, 2010). Nietzsche was called up for military service in September, 1867, and his physical shortcomings posed no obstacle, as the ever-present looming threat of war was present. Nietzsche was unfortunate not to join the guards in Berlin and was sent to Naumburg as part of the mounted artillery (Young, 2010).

Nietzsche was deemed the best horse rider amongst the new recruits but in March, 1868 had an accident whilst mounting his horse and was badly hurt injuring his chest and as a result his period of military service came to an abrupt end. The cause of the injury could have been due to his myopia as Young (2010) mentions that his sister Elizabeth said that “it made it hard for him [Nietzsche] to measure distances” (p.74.). The injury left Nietzsche bedridden for ten days with serious injuries to his chest. On 15 October 1868, he was granted his birthday wish and was declared temporarily unfit to be in the army (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

However, as Young (2010) mentions, Nietzsche came to realise that Bismarck was not the "Good European" (p.77) that he believed. Nietzsche in his later life came to loath Bismarck, the effective ruler for the duration of Nietzsche’s life. Young (2010) also suggested that Nietzsche began to realise that, through the deaths of friends and family, the purpose of war was to serve itself and not the interest of anybody else (Young, 2010).

5.5 The Reluctant Professor

On his return to Leipzig, after being discharged from the military, Nietzsche deemed himself more mature and sought more appropriate accommodation in contrast to the student digs he stayed in before he left. In November, 1868, during Nietzsche’s Leipzig years he met the German composer, Richard Wagner, with whom he developed a very significant friendship (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Hollingdale (1965) states that Nietzsche was so taken by the music of Wagner that he announced his conversion to Wagnerianism in October 1868, shortly before meeting him in person. Scholars have described Wagner as an extravagant and flamboyant individual. Jackson (2011) described Wagner as a controversial
and larger-than-life person. He would listen to his own operas and waltz in his garden. Nietzsche was surely taken by Wagner’s persona, and this new found aesthetic attraction was to have an impact on Nietzsche's life and thought in the months that followed (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011; Young, 2010).

Two months after meeting Wagner, Nietzsche’s professional career started to take off. According to Young (2010), the chair of classical philology became vacant in 1869, and Nietzsche’s mentor and admirer, Friedrich Ritschl, was asked to recommend a suitable candidate for the position. Ritschl highly recommended Nietzsche for the position and as a result, on 12 February 1869, at the age of twenty-four, he was appointed to the position. He obtained his doctorate based on earlier work he had published without any formal examination, unlike his friends, Deussen and Rhode who had to work through the conventional academic systems (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Together with his career success, Nietzsche also became closer to his new acquaintance, Richard Wagner, who lived about 20 minutes from Basel (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

Nietzsche’s good fortune was accepted with jubilation by his mother and sister, but it was at the expense of ending his youth and entering a world of more responsibility and arduous labour (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Hollingdale (1965) suggested that Ritschl’s enthusiasm could have clouded his judgement of recommending Nietzsche for professorship at such a young age. Nietzsche, who had been in school since age six, spent another ten years at Basel University, a total of twenty-eight years in academia (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). As cited in Hollingdale (1965, p.51.) Nietzsche later wrote that, “one should not become a university professor at age twenty-four”. He was also momentarily overcome by his grandeur and terminated his friendship with Deussen because of his status as a professor – this naive edict was later withdrawn (Young, 2010).

Nietzsche’s new position and the salary that came with it meant that he could then support his family. Young (2010) mentions that Nietzsche’s mother, at the time of his new position, was surviving on her own pension. Despite his boosted career in philology, he increasingly became interested in philosophy. Philology immersed Nietzsche in books and as a result had little practical knowledge of how ordinary men and woman functioned. Nietzsche became increasingly aware of the austerity of philology and it appeared to him that philosophy would be the gateway to new ideas (Hollingdale, 1965).
Hollingdale (1965) mentions that soon after Nietzsche started at Basel, he became aware that he had an interest in teaching and the ability to spark interest amongst his students. According to Hollingdale (1965), his students had the impression that:

They had sat at the feet not so much of a pedagogue as of a living ephor from antique Greece, who had leapt across time to come among them and tell them of Homer, Sophocles, Plato and their gods. As if he spoke from his own knowledge of things quite self-evident and still completely valid – that was the impression he made upon them (p.58).

According to Young (2010), Nietzsche demanded a great deal of discipline and hard work from his students and had the ability to truly inspire and influence their lives, a “true educator” (p. 102). Nietzsche had a considerable work load during his first year at Basel; he lectured in topics ranging from Greek literature and Pre-Socratic philosophy, Greek and Roman rhetoric to Plato and Sophocles (Young, 2010).

Apart from his ability in the classroom, he was also seen as a well groomed person. Hollingdale (1965) suggests that his appearance caused excitement due to his attention to dress, almost to dandyism. Young (2010) notes, that Nietzsche had a particular interest in the clothing that elderly people wore and avoided any youthful attire. He also grew a moustache, which he became known for, and which obscured his youth to an extent (Hollingdale, 1965). Young (2010) highlights that Nietzsche’s colleagues were unusually amiable to the new professor, and he had to attend a considerable number of dinners. The most notable historian of art and a colleague was Jacob Burckhardt (1818 - 1897) whom Nietzsche admired for the rest of his life.

During Nietzsche’s time at Basel and as a professor, the growing frustration of being confined to the conventionalities and prescriptive mode of being a professor continued to grow. Nietzsche already acquainted with Richard Wagner and with his growing admiration for him, led him to become a regular visitor at the Wagner residence (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011, Young, 2010). Young (2010) states that Nietzsche felt more at home in Tribschen whilst staying with Wagner and his wife, Cosima Wagner in Tribschen – and suggests that Wagner unknowingly became a father figure for Nietzsche. Nietzsche loved the Wagner villa in Tribschen and had wonderful memories of the time he spent there. Young (2010) goes further to state that Wagner and his wife influenced Nietzsche emotionally and intellectually, whereby some of Nietzsche’s philosophical work had a Wagnerian sentiment to it. But the idyll was soon shattered with the announcement of Wagner’s move to Bayreuth.
This caused a great deal of sadness in Nietzsche’s life and the Wagner – Nietzsche relationship was never the same again (Young, 2010).

During Nietzsche’s time as a professor war broke out once more. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war was declared at the end of the 1860s. According to Young (2010) the outbreak of the war was largely engineered by Bismarck. It seems that the rise of Prussian dominance initiated a reaction from the French under Napoleon Bonaparte. Despite the brief period of the Franco-Prussian war there were a large number of casualties amongst both German and French troops. Basel granted Nietzsche leave of absence to serve as a medical orderly during the war and he spent his time attending to the sick and injured soldiers at the front. According to Young (2010) and Hollingdale (1965), Nietzsche had first-hand experience of the cruelty of warfare and Young (2010) states that the aftermath of the war left him “psychologically damaged” (p.138.). Young (2010) also notes that Nietzsche’s view of war and being Prussian began to change, as he referred to Bismarck’s Prussia as “Barbarism” (p. 141.). The mature Nietzsche, in stark contrast to the teenager, began to see that the purpose of war and politics was to serve themselves and not the liberation and growth of humanity. During his service as a medical orderly he became ill and suffered attacks of dysentery and diphtheria which resulted in him being discharged from military service (Hollingdale, 1965).

Nietzsche returned to Basel at the end of October, 1870 but still felt the effects of his weakened constitution due to his military service. Young (2010) mentions that, despite the illness Nietzsche faced, he also suffered from a degree of post-traumatic stress and that possibly resulted in the insomnia, exhaustion and depression he experienced after the war. By February 1871 Nietzsche’s condition had deteriorated and he had to take leave from work to recover. This was the start of increased ill health for Nietzsche, and the childhood headaches turned into disabling migraines returned. During his time of recovery and rest he managed to write *The Birth of Tragedy* which was largely based on his experience in the war and violence in general (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011; Young, 2010). Despite the vicious attacks from migraines and stomach pains, Nietzsche displayed a good sense of resistance towards his frail health. Hollingdale (1965) notes that even when it seemed that Nietzsche was done for, he recovered once more as he summed up his experiences in the well-known axiom: “What does not kill me makes me stronger” (Hollingdale, date, p.66.).

During the next five years of Nietzsche’s life he worked on and published a number of books, such as *The Untimely Meditations* and *Human, All too Human*. It should also be
noted that his dissatisfaction with philology grew and his interest in philosophy became more potent (Hollingdale, 1965). As previously mentioned, Nietzsche was enamoured with the music and persona of the classical composer and music theorist, Richard Wagner (Jackson, 2011). The period of the early and mid-1870s was significant to his relationship with the Wagner family. The influence of Wagner on Nietzsche was evident in his scholarly work and his emotional state. Nietzschean biographers such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010) have noted that Nietzsche was indeed a Wagnerian and attempted to support Wagner’s work and legacy as a musical maestro. However, Hollingdale (1965) mentions that Nietzsche’s obsession with Wagner was weakening due to his innate need for independence and free thought that could not be satisfied under Richard Wagner’s wing.

Young (2010) describes Wagner’s dissatisfaction with Nietzsche; when he could not honour a Christmas dinner invitation in 1872. This appears to be one of many petty dissatisfactions of Wagner’s demanding persona towards Nietzsche. A dichotomy was established in Nietzsche’s view of Wagner when he became increasingly critical of his beloved idyll, Richard Wagner. Hollingdale (1965) mentions the period of 1874 to 1875 as a crucial time that marked an initial breaking point of the Nietzsche – Wagner relationship, which continued into the years that followed. Hollingdale (1965) claims that Nietzsche was split in two, emotionally he was in favour of Wagner but intellectually he desired more freedom. Nietzsche briefly attended a festival in Bayreuth where Wagner performed but apparently he did not enjoy himself and returned to Basel. The break from Wagner resulted in a seemingly anti-Wagnerian book titled, Human, All too Human, a book which Wagner himself criticised (Young, 2010; Hollingdale, 1965).

5.6 The Wanderer

Nietzsche’s frail health continued to hamper his life and work. September, 1878 was the final semester and his academic career for Nietzsche at Basel University. He travelled to Geneva and Basel because of his ill health and was advised by medical professionals to seek a more conducive climate (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche suffered a collapse due to his failing health condition in 1879, which Hollingdale (1965) described as a turning point in his life. Subsequently, Nietzsche lived a more solitary life and was not able to settle down in a specific town or city due to his ill health and need for a healthier climate. Due to his health difficulties he required a form of ministration which his devoted friend and also admirer, Peter Gast (1854 – 1918) provided for a significant period (Hollingdale, 1965). Jackson
(2011) mentions that during 1897 to 1889 Nietzsche was found wandering through Italy, Southern France and Switzerland. Some of his greatest work such as *Dawn* (1880), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus spoke Zarathustra* (1885), and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) was created during these travels,

It has been argued by both Jackson (2011) and Hollingdale (1965) that Nietzsche’s solitary existence should not been seen as isolation as he still maintained close ties with his friends and family. Jackson states that Nietzsche could have ended his life due to his health predicament but chose not to. Nietzsche himself stated in a letter to his doctor that, “My existence is a fearful burden”. One may derive from such a statement that he was fully aware of the fragility and angst of his life (Hollingdale, 1965, p. 151.). After his retirement from academia he received a small pension and found a residence in St. Moritz, a place where he spent a considerable amount of time, despite his constant travels in search of a suitable climate. He managed to complete *The Wanderer and His Shadow* and the significance of this work, according to Young (2010), is that Nietzsche took a liking to the positivism of Athenian philosopher, Epicurus. Nietzsche reached a significant low in his health whilst working on *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. Paradoxically he embraced his fatal state of health with a resilient attitude (Young, 2010). According to Young (2010,) Nietzsche wrote that:

I am at end of my 35th year, mid-life and so encircled by death. Because of my health I must think of sudden death…and so I feel like an old man, but also because I have done my life work…basically I have put my observation of life already to the test: many will do that in the future. My spirit had not been cowed by prolonged and painful suffering; indeed I seem more cheerful and benevolent than ever before. Where have I got this new condition from? (p.280).

It may be argued that Nietzsche’s philosophical work gave meaning to his insufferable existence. Nietzsche’s travels continued, and he moved to Genoa, Sills Maria, back to Naumburg. He began to prefer living alone and anonymous and this formed part of his new Epicurean outlook on life, to live modestly (Young, 2010). Nietzsche was advised to stop reading and writing for several years in order to prevent him from going completely blind. He opted to do the contrary and continued with his philosophical work (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s ill health forced him to retire from his professorship and to pay more attention to
his physical well-being. Instead of resting and recovering, he focussed on his philosophical work and this was the start of Nietzsche’s philosophical persona.

5.7 The Lou Salomé Affair

Jackson (2011) acknowledges that Nietzsche possibly had a lover during the period of his travels and that he also experienced feelings of regret and melancholy due to his wishing for a family, wife and children. However, these were surpassed by his passion for his philosophical work. The period 1874 to 1877 were marked by a number of marriages and engagements amongst Nietzsche’s close friends. Hollingdale (1965) states that during Christmas 1875, Nietzsche proposed to a lady named Mathilde Trampedach. It is believed by Hollingdale (1965) that Nietzsche mistook Mathilde’s friendly demeanour towards him as a sign of more intimate attraction, which was not the case. Nietzsche proposed without success but soon apologised for his behaviour and remained on polite terms with Mathilde. Hollingdale (1965) further mentions that Nietzsche was constantly on the lookout for a wife and doubted whether his proposal to Mathilde was of a serious nature.

One of Nietzsche’s friends, Paul Rée (1849 - 1901), whom he met in the early 1870s, wrote to him about a young lady named, Lou Salomé, and what an amazing person she was. According to Young (2010), Lou Salomé was the daughter of a Russian general and was the youngest of six children. She possessed desirable attributes that included intelligence, resoluteness, courage and clarity of purpose. Salomé was also in search of a favourable climatic environment due to her health which could possibly have contributed to her passion for life and to study philosophy (Jackson, 2011). Both Rée and Nietzsche were taken by the nature of the twenty-one year old Russian lady.

The letters Rée wrote to Nietzsche served to attract him to Salomé, and in April, 1882 while Nietzsche was in Rome he made an appointment to meet her. Young (2010) suggests that “Nietzsche [who] was already in love with love, was ready to be rescued from his life of solitude” (p. 339). Nietzsche, as expected, proposed to Lou Salome but was unsuccessful. However, Nietzsche’s friend, Paul Rée, also had feelings for Salomé and also proposed marriage to her. He was also unsuccessful and she suggested that they all remain friends, live together (chastely) and develop their intellectual work (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

This arrangement appeared to be manageable at first but soon faltered due to the covert feelings of both, Nietzsche and Rée. Lou spent time separately with both Nietzsche
and Rée, but this resulted in jealousy. Furthermore, Nietzsche’s sister, Elizabeth, had an immense dislike of Lou Salomé, probably because of her mannish character (Young, 2010; Hollingdale, 1965). Young (2010) stated that Salomé was determined to not be part of the “children-church-kitchen” mould for women of her time (p. 340.). Therefore, she rejected marriage, as she knew that it would interfere with her objective of personal liberation.

According to Young (2010), Rée began to plot against Nietzsche and to dishonour the agreement of maintaining a platonic friendship with Salomé. Rée again confessed his love for her and tried to convince her that Nietzsche should be excluded from the friendship. Nietzsche naively maintained his relationship within the limits of the arrangement but also became guilty of surreptitiously disclosing his true feelings for Salomé. Nietzsche had opportunities to travel with her and took long walks in her company. Rée had become suspicious of the relationship between Salomé and Nietzsche, and she seemingly saw other unattractive sides to Nietzsche’s character, (Young, 2010, p. 350.) She stated that “Nietzsche’s nature contains many a dark dungeon and hidden cellar that does not surface in the course of a brief acquaintance” and concluded that “someday, we could even confront each other as enemies” (p. 350.). Despite the inferences she made about the hidden sides to Nietzsche’s persona, they did have a significant intellectual connection, unlike what she encountered with Rée (Young, 2010).

According to Young (2010), Lou and Rée ended the affair and friendship and informed Nietzsche of their departure. Nietzsche soon realised that he had been betrayed by them. According to Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010), the Lou Salome affair caused Nietzsche a considerable amount of emotional pain and he returned to his former solitary life and never met with either of them again.

5.8 The Final Years, Collapse and Death

Nietzsche travelled to Italy after his ordeal with Lou Salome and Paul Rée. From 1882 to 1889 he concentrated on his philosophical works, such as his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and other works. He still continued to travel due to his frail health, which started to manifest itself mentally (Jackson, 2011). Young (2010) mentions peculiar shifts in Nietzsche’s personality and sporadic states of euphoria that his friends noticed. Jackson (2011) also states that there have been questions surrounding the intellectual credibility of Nietzsche’s work during the 1880s, due to his wavering mental capacity. Jackson suggests that there is a stable
continuation within Nietzsche’s work and philosophy despite the attempts to discredit him by some authors who wondered if those books should be accepted based on their literary structure and coherent arguments.

The deterioration in Nietzsche’s mental capacity became apparent during the latter half of 1889 when he began writing deranged letters to friends and public figures (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). His anomalous behaviour became more apparent to the people that lived with him and he began to play his piano day and night. On 3 January 1889 as Nietzsche left his lodgings he saw a cabman beating his horse and bearing witness to this event, flung himself across the horse’s neck and lost consciousness. He was never the same after that day.

Hollingdale (1965) states that during the eleven years of his insanity Nietzsche became a ghostly figure of mythology which could have been due to the fame surrounding his work. During his insanity his mother took care of him until her death on 20 April 1897. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche died on 25 August 1900, six weeks before his 56th birthday (Hollingdale, 1965).

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter Nietzsche’s life was explored and discussed. By means of the data collection grid significant aspects of Nietzsche’s life were gathered for incorporation into the current psychobiography of Nietzsche’s life. In the following chapter Nietzsche’s life as depicted in this chapter is discussed within the formal psychological framework of Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person.
CHAPTER 6
Discussion of Findings

Chapter Preview

The focus of this chapter is a discussion of the findings of the research study in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 5. I, as the researcher, have applied Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person to explore whether Nietzsche lived a fully functioning life. The foundation of the discussion is based on the data collected as discussed in Chapter 5; hence I will illuminate all significant and salient aspects of Nietzsche’s life that indicate congruence with Rogers’ theory. Henceforth, I will refer to Carl Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person as Rogers’ qualities.

Rogers (1961) describes the path towards becoming a fully functioning person as a process and not as a state of being. Brodley and Bozarth (1991) have identified that there is a misconception concerning the process of becoming a fully functioning person. Therefore, I, as the researcher, want to sensitise the reader that certain personality qualities may not be evident in all stages of Nietzsche’s life but will highlight those aspects evident in particular stages of his life. Evidence of psychological functioning that does not fit with Rogers’ theory will also be discussed, in an attempt to engage critically with the data and the chosen theoretical framework of the study.

6.1 An Increasing Openness to Experiences

According to Rogers (1961), persons who are living as fully functioning persons have an increasing trust in themselves and this quality being the polar opposite of defensiveness. Rogers (1961), describes the aspect of defensiveness as any situation which can be perceived by an individual as threatening to the self-concept. However, persons who are open to everyday situations may have fewer defence mechanisms. Such individuals will experience any situation as open and be aware of the very moment in which they find themselves. Henderson and Kirschenbaum (1989) state that instead of depending on social norms or institutional codes, individuals that act upon what feels right in a given situation experience this mode of organismic trust as a competent and fulfilling guide to their behaviour.

Based on the data collected, Nietzsche displayed both positive and negative evidence concerning his openness to experiences as a person. As a child, especially the first five years of his life, as described in Chapter 5, could be considered to have taken place in a stable micro environment. His parents provided a supportive, stable and stimulating family
environment. According to writers such as Hollingdale (1965), Young (2010) and Jackson (2011) the Nietzsche family was religious and displayed a history of service within the Christian church which could have contributed to a stable environment. Both Hollingdale (1965) and Jackson (2011) described Nietzsche’s childhood as stable and almost as a ‘paradisiac’ childhood (Hollingdale, 1965, p. 8.). According to Hollingdale (1965), Nietzsche’s home was isolated from the outside world and therefore the family never had to deal with the turmoil of the revolutionary events that occurred during 1848 to 1849. These Revolutionary events were also known as the, *March Revolutions of 1848*, this was underpinned by popular discontent about the autocratic rule in Germany (Young, 2010). The people of Germany expressed their discontent and desire for political liberty and democracy by means of demonstrations. However, a lack of unity amongst the middle and lower class forced them to split and not succeed in revolutionising Germany. Subsequently, the ruling class maintained their governance forcing some of the liberated members into exile (Young, 2010)

Nietzsche’s early childhood was uninterrupted until the death of his father, Ludwig Nietzsche and his younger brother, Joseph Nietzsche. It has been noted by writers like Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010,) that the death of Nietzsche’s father had a significant impact on him. Nietzsche recalled that “though I [Nietzsche] was very young and inexperienced, I still had some idea of death: the thought that I would be separated for ever from my dear father seized me and I wept bitterly’ (Young, 2010, p.9.). Furthermore, Young states that “though he [Nietzsche] was only five years old at the time [in 1849], the loss marked him for life” (p. 9.). In one of Nietzsche’s writings he considered himself to have become a ”fatherless orphan” and also to have a lack of security (Young, 2010, p.9.). It is clear that the young Nietzsche had a deep love and appreciation for his father Ludwig and that the death of his father brought about a change in his life. The abrupt changes within Nietzsche’s childhood lead him to experience a sense of instability, therefore, expressing his lack of ‘security’ after the death of his father.

Rogers’ quality of ”openness to experience” is underpinned by an individual’s lack of defence mechanism within him/herself and how he or she perceives an environment or situation at a given moment (Rogers, 1961). Nietzsche’s family had to vacate the vicarage of the late Pastor Ludwig Nietzsche in April 1850 and the family found themselves in a new town, the walled town of Naumburg. The town had a stone wall surrounding it which served as a security measure, and was not too far from Röcken (Hollingdale, 1965; Jackson, 2011;
Young, 2010. Young (2010) recalls Nietzsche’s sadness at leaving their countryside residence for the town of Naumburg. Nietzsche distastefully observed that not all residents of Naumburg were acquainted with each other and he appeared not to welcome his new environment (Young, 2010). His two aunts also passed away in 1855 and the Nietzsche family grew smaller, leaving only his mother, Franziska, and younger sister, Elizabeth. Nietzsche was now eleven years old. Due to the death of his father and brother, Nietzsche seemed to display a degree of defensiveness to these changes in his environment. The sense of loss and the impact thereof is emphasized by Young (2010) who points out that Nietzsche eventually came to terms with his new environment and settled in his new hometown. The arduous time after losing his father and relocating left Nietzsche with an emotional ‘scar’, and despite his adapting to Naumburg, the yearning for the security of a recovered homeland remained an undertone throughout his life (Young, 2010).

According to Hollingdale (1965), Nietzsche’s early school career at the prestigious Pforta School commenced with a degree of reluctance. Pforta executed a peculiar sense of control over its pupils, similar to a penal system. His first four months at Pforta were filled with a great deal of homesickness and he wanted to return home but found support from one of his tutors who assisted him during the initial months (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s homesickness could be seen as a lack of “existential living” (Rogers, 1961) and defensiveness to his changing environment. The quality of “existential living” will be discussed later in the chapter.

Nietzsche’s time at Pforta provided him with an educational and social platform that possibly contributed to his future career path. According to Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010), Nietzsche displayed some misconduct and rebellious behaviour whilst at Pforta. Hollingdale (1965) states that the period of puberty was upon him and the exemplary pupil began to display some unruly behaviour. Young (2010) suggests that Nietzsche may have acclimatized to his new social environment shown by his involvement in both academically constructive and rebellious activities. Aside from Nietzsche’s social rebellion, he also developed a literary or intellectual rebellion and showed an interest in the work of Lord Byron (1788 - 1824) (Young, 2010). It is noted by Young (2010) that Nietzsche’s engagement with critical writers evoked a sense of critique within himself as a Christian. After his personal crisis of the loss of his father, younger brother and their home, there is evidence that Nietzsche engaged in social and personal experiences as an adolescent at Pforta that possibly contributed to his personality development.
Nietzsche’s student days were filled with a significant amount of experiential living, where he engaged in a number of social activities, fraternities, and was also politically active. Young (2010) described Nietzsche as being politically supporting Otto von Bismarck’s efforts to unite the German Confederation. Nietzsche’s time doing military service exposed him to witnessing a significant amount of suffering and fatalities. Young (2010) suggests that the war of 1866 in Germany made him realise that the purpose of war was to survive a political means to maintain or acquire power. This also led him to write his first book *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1872.

Nietzsche became a professor of philology at Basel University when he was only twenty-four years old. During his ten year period in academia, he realised that the world of academia did not allow him the intellectual freedom he longed for (Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s time in academia as a professor led him to abhor his career in philology; he felt that philology and being a university professor was not the career path he wanted to continue in. Nietzsche longed to be in the field of philosophy, where he could be free to think and write as he desired (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Nietzsche’s life after academia proved to be productive and despite his perpetual ill health he started his career as a writer. His writings and philosophical disposition aided him in creating and following his own way of thinking and developing his own unique view of life which is captured in his philosophy. Nietzsche showed trust in his judgement and created his own way of life. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Based on Nietzsche’s childhood and adolescence it is possible to propose that he developed into a more critical person who was conscious of his existence and his culture. Contrary to his almost perfect childhood upbringing it is also possible to conclude that Nietzsche became more open to experiences as an adolescent and as an adult. Rogers (1961) stated that individuals who displayed such qualities accepted reality as it is and did not have a ‘distorted’ view of the world in order to defend themselves from crisis situations.

### 6.2 Increasing Existential Living

According to Rogers (1961) existential living refers to persons who are fully open to new experiences without defensiveness and who experience each moment as new. As a result such persons will realize that what they are in the next moment, and what they will do grows out of that moment and cannot be predicted in advance either by the person or others. Such living in the moment means an absence of rigidity, tight organization, and the imposition of
structure on experience. It means instead maximum adaptability, discovery of structure in experience, and a flowing, changing organization of self and personality.

Nietzsche is considered to be one of the distinguished pioneering thinkers in existential philosophy of the 19th century. Considering Nietzsche’s religious upbringing as a child, his disciplinarian school career at Pforta as an adolescent and also his early monotonous career as a professor of philology at Basel University, I found no substantial evidence to identify a comprehensive level of existential living by Nietzsche during the above-mentioned periods of his life. I, as the researcher, noted in the chapter preview that due to the process, and not a fixed state, of becoming a fully functioning person, according to Rogers (1961), is it apparent that some principles of Rogers’ theory may only be evident during particular stages of life. I propose the following example and justification as a possible explanation to support my above-mentioned assertion:

Nietzsche displayed a degree of intellectual and social rebellion as a student, as discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.3 The Student). Hollingdale (1965) states that Nietzsche indulged in a moderate amount of horse-play and wine-drinking as a student and also enjoyed a brief flirtation with Deussen’s sister, Marie (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Despite Nietzsche’s financial constraints that added to his hardship as a student, he continued to indulge in student parties, and many beer drinking evenings in the local pubs. This resulted in Nietzsche joining a student fraternity, the Franconia. Young (2010) states that concerning Nietzsche’s intellectual or spiritual rebellion, it was evident in the theological essays that he submitted, some of which were incomplete due to his continuous beer-drinking, that he was not a believer but an external observer. Hollingdale (1965) argues that Nietzsche’s belief in Christianity and the validity of religion was extinct when he left Pforta and abandoned the study of theology at Bonn University. I contend that Nietzsche’s student rebellion may also be considered as a transitional period of becoming or developing from adolescence into early adulthood. However, Nietzsche as a child was seen to be very conformist, contrary to his life as an adolescent (Young, 2010).

I, as the researcher, suggest that Nietzsche’s early professorship at Basel University may also have served as a catalyst to his existential living at a later stage in his life. Nietzsche’s appointment as a professor may have been one of a possible contributory factor in his adoption of existential living. Although Nietzsche lived and followed a structured academic life, his position as a professor could have been a catalyst to progress to a more
creative and flexible means of living. Rogers (1961) suggests that the persons that display the quality of existential living, can freely experience each moment in which they find themselves. Such living in the moment means a lack of rigidity and imposed structure. Rogers stated that “It means instead a maximum amount of adaptability, a discovery of structure inexperience, a flowing, changing organisation of self and personality” (Rogers, 1961, p. 189).

Young (2010) states that Friedrich Ritschl, Nietzsche’s philology professor, recommended him for the vacant position of chair of philology at Basel University. Subsequently, on 12 February 1869, Nietzsche was appointed to the position at the age of twenty-four. He obtained his Doctorate based on earlier work that he had published without any formal examination (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche’s good fortune was certainly accepted by his family but at the expense of him ending his youth and entering a world of more responsibility and structured labour (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Hollingdale (1965) suggests that Ritschl’s enthusiasm could have clouded his judgement in recommending him for a professorship at such a young age. Nietzsche had been in school since the age of six and had spent another ten years at Basel University, a total of twenty-eight years in academia (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). As cited in Hollingdale (1965, p.51.) Nietzsche himself stated that, ”one should not become a university professor at age twenty-four”.

No substantial evidence was found to determine whether Nietzsche exhibited what Rogers (1961) considered to be existential living during his time as a child, school boy and as a professor at Basel University. Nietzsche’s disciplined school career at Pforta and his inauguration into a professorship could have contributed to the rigidity of his life during that time.

Notwithstanding Nietzsche’s career boost in philology, he increasingly became interested in philosophy (Young, 2010). Philology immersed Nietzsche in books and therefore he had little practical knowledge of how ordinary men and woman functioned. He became increasingly aware of the austerity of philology and it appeared to him that philosophy would be the gateway to new ideas (Hollingdale, 1965). During Nietzsche’s time at Basel and as a professor the frustration of being confined to the conventionalities and a prescriptive mode of being a professor continued to grow (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

It is of importance to mention Nietzsche’s relationship with the composer, Richard Wagner and its contribution to his life. Nietzsche was taken by the music and persona of the
classical composer and music theorist, Richard Wagner (Jackson, 2011). The influence Wagner had on Nietzsche was evident in his scholarly work and his emotional state. It is noted by Nietzschean biographers such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010) that Nietzsche was indeed a Wagnerian and attempted to support Wagner’s work and legacy as a musical maestro. Young (2010) states that Nietzsche felt at home whilst staying with Wagner and his wife, Cosima Wagner in Tribschen and suggests that Wagner unknowingly became a father figure for Nietzsche. Nietzsche loved the Wagner villa in Tribschen and had wonderful memories of the time spent there. However, Hollingdale (1965) mentions that Nietzsche’s obsession with Wagner weakened due to Nietzsche’s innate need for independence and free thought. This need could not be satisfied under Richard Wagner’s wing. I argue that this early sign, of a will to intellectual and personal emancipation, can be considered to be evidence of Nietzsche having become more existential in his way of living.

Young (2010) describes how Wagner became displeased with Nietzsche when, owing to illness and exhaustion, Nietzsche could not honour a Christmas dinner invitation from him in 1872. This appears to be one of many petty dissatisfactions of Wagner’s demanding persona towards Nietzsche which lead him to become increasingly critical of his beloved idyll, Richard Wagner. Hollingdale (1965) mentions the period of 1874 - 1875 as a crucial time that marked an initial breaking point of the Nietzsche – Wagner relationship. Hollingdale (1965) claims that Nietzsche was faced with a dichotomous dilemma, emotionally he was in favour of Wagner but intellectually he desired more autonomy. He mentions that Nietzsche briefly attended a festival in Bayreuth where Wagner performed and seemingly did not enjoy himself and returned to Basel. The break from Wagner resulted in a seemingly anti-Wagnerian book titled, *Human, All too Human* (1878), a book which Wagner himself criticised (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). I, as the researcher, suggest that Nietzsche’s break from Wagner can be seen as part of his process of existential living.

Thus far, I have discussed segments of Nietzsche’s life which I consider to have contributed to his process of existential living. It has been recorded by notable Nietzschean biographers such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010) that Nietzsche had a deep interest in the study of philosophy whilst working as a professor of philology. However, Nietzsche retired from his academic career and the world of philology to attend to his wavering health. Nietzsche then pursued his philosophical interest and began his writing career which proved to be a positive cornerstone to maintaining his health.
During Nietzsche’s travels in Europe he managed to complete, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, published in 1879. Nietzsche reached a significant low in his health whilst working on *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, and paradoxically embraced his fatal state of health with a positivist attitude (Young, 2010). As cited in Young (2010) Nietzsche wrote:

I am at end of my 35th year, mid-life and so encircled by death. Because of my health I must think of sudden death…and so I feel like an old man, but also because I have done my life work…basically I have put my observation of life already to the test: many will do that in the future. My spirit had not been cowed by prolonged and painful suffering; indeed I seem more cheerful and benevolent than ever before. Where have I got this new condition from? (p.280.).

The significance of *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, according to Young (2010), is that during the writing of this book, Nietzsche started reading the work of Athenian philosopher, Epicurus. Subsequently, Nietzsche embraced the positivism of Epicurus and this is evident in his approach to his suffering.

Furthermore, Jackson (2011) states that between 1880 and 1889, Nietzsche travelled through Italy, Southern France and Switzerland. Some of his greatest work was created during these travels, such as *Dawn* (1880), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886).

It has been argued by both Jackson (2011) and Hollingdale (1965) that Nietzsche’s solitary existence should not been seen as isolation as he still maintained close ties with his friends and family. Jackson states that Nietzsche could have ended his life due to his health predicament but chose to continue living. Nietzsche, himself stated in a letter to his doctor that “my existence is a fearful burden” (as cited in Hollingdale, 1965, p. 151.), and one may derive from such a statement that he was fully aware of the fragility and angst in his life at the time. Hollingdale (1965) described this as a turning point in Nietzsche’s life. According to Young (2010), as a result, Nietzsche lived a more solitary life and was not able to settle down in a specific town or city due to his illnesses and the need for a specific climate for his health.

I am of the opinion that the events leading up to Nietzsche’s retirement as a professor and his frail health which forced him to live a life of endless travelling significantly contributed to him living a more existential life. Ironically, it can be understood that Nietzsche’s illnesses may have restricted him to not being as fluid or living in the moment as
Rogers (1916) depicts of a fully functioning person. In my opinion I believe that despite Nietzsche’s suffering he attained a level of resilience and meaning through his philosophical work. Rogers’ (1961) therapeutic process is aimed at providing an environment in which clients may confront their suffering.

Creativity as a characteristic of the fully functioning person and basic trustworthiness in human nature, are considered to be positive attributes of a person who is becoming fully functioning (Rogers, 1961). These qualities and how they relate to Nietzsche’s life will be discussed below.

6.3 Creativity as a Characteristic of the Fully Functioning Person

Rogers (1961) purported that fully functioning persons involved in the directional process of becoming could be recognized by the student of evolution as persons that can adapt and survive in an ever-changing world. The person would be able to creatively make adjustments to new as well as historical conditions and would be a fit vanguard of human development. Henderson and Kirshenbaum (1989) state that the adaptability of the fully functioning person allows him or her to move forward even when they are unhappy in a given environment. Based on the data collected on Nietzsche’s “Childhood Years”, I found evidence of creativity within his life. According to a number of writers such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010), Nietzsche has been described as a talented child prodigy, writer and philosopher. He could read by age five due to his mother’s efforts in facilitating early learning. He also played the piano, wrote poetry and composed classical music (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

Nietzsche, together with his Naumburg friends, Pinder and Krug established their own musical and literary society, Germania, under the leadership of Nietzsche himself. Rogers (1961) states that a sense of creativity is a positive implication of a person that is moving toward becoming a more fully functioning person. Nietzsche’s love for music and his literary ability played a vital role in the development of his personality. Rogers (1961) witnessed a change within his clients that responded positively to his therapy. He believed that part of becoming more fully functioning, more authentic, implied that persons trusted their own judgement of what they deemed to be creative and were not dependent on the status quo. My own experience, as researcher, throughout the current exploration of Nietzsche’s life was that
he had a distinct level of literary creativity and intelligence. Nietzsche is also widely known as one of the most influential writers of the 19th century (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010).

6.4 Basic Trustworthiness of Human Nature

According to Rogers (1961), when persons are functioning freely, constructively and in a trustworthy manner, their reactions to physical and psychological experiences would be positive, constructive and they would be in the process of functioning fully as a person. This results in an increasing trust in the person’s own judgement in a given situation. Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2003) also state that based on the person’s openness to experiences and organismic trust, such a person, can respond positively and constructively to their own needs and that of the environment.

Rogers (1961) maintains that as part of the process of becoming more fully functioning, the person displays a degree of self-trust. Based on the data collected, Nietzsche’s life after 1800 till his death displayed trust in his own judgement. It may also be argued that Nietzsche’s significant path to "trust in human nature" was his abandonment of Christianity (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche is very expressive towards the restraints of Christianity in his quasi-autobiography, Ecce Homo (1908) (Large, 2007). According to Young (2010), during his time at Pforta he returned home for the Easter vacation and informed his mother about his decision to abandon Christianity and the study of theology. This decision was not taken light-heartedly and resulted in tears and allegations. Ironically, Nietzsche’s mother put her trust in her God, and based on her belief that God directs all that we do, she accepted his newfound approach to life (Hollingdale, 1965). Nietzsche’s sister, Elizabeth, was angered by her brother’s decision to abandon the religion of their fathers and forefathers (Hollingdale, 1965). It was clear then that he would not fulfil the career paths of his father and forefathers. Hollingdale (1965) suggests that the Nietzsche who left Pfora for university was, “already himself”, displaying a sense of trust in his own judgement.

Therefore, I consider Nietzsche to have had a basic trust in human nature as is evident from the data collected and analysed and by means of his philosophy. The following principle of the actualising tendency is considered to be the peak of psychological well-being. Rogers (1961) considers the fully functioning person to be directing him or herself to actualisation. The integration of all the above-mentioned and discussed qualities, according to Rogers (1961), would result in the person attaining their highest potential in life.
6.5 Actualising Tendency

Rogers (1961) believed that man, as well as plants, have the directional urge to develop and achieve a higher state of being,”a motivational drive” (Joseph & Patterson, 2007, p.120). It is evident that persons who possess or display this actualising tendency and who are open to a variety of experiences, will feel free to make choices, live existentially and trust their own human judgement. These characteristics contribute to the conditions required for persons to achieve a more fully functioning mode of living. The actualising tendency is the ultimate level of psychological well-being according to Rogers’ theory. According to DeRobertis (2006) when the actualising tendency is adopted by the self, or person, the person is orientated to future development of who he/she would ultimately like to become. Throne (1992) mentions, Rogers acknowledged that the concept of the actualising tendency could be found within different psychological theories, such as with Abraham Maslow’s theory of motivation. The actualising tendency is considered to be the driving factor underpinning Rogers’ theory of personality.

As the researcher, considering Nietzsche’s difficulty with his deteriorating health it can be suggested that Nietzsche had a degree of determination to ascend and achieve his goals regardless of his given circumstance. Nietzsche is known for intellectual ability but there is evidence that Nietzsche maintained a balance between his academic and physical training as a school boy. Jackson (2011) mentions that Nietzsche was a studious schoolboy but also took part in a variety of physical activities, such as, swimming, skating and walking and had a good physical posture. .

According to Young (2010) it was during Nietzsche’s early school career that signs of his frail health appeared. He was plagued by blinding headaches which stayed with him for the rest of his life. His frail health and headaches can possibly be linked to his short-sightedness and the large amount of reading he did as a child (Jackson, 2011). Nietzsche was instructed to reduce his reading in order to recover after his retirement from academia (Young, 2010). However, he continued to produce his literary works and this thus appeared to have been an aid in maintaining his health (Young, 2010).

According to Young (2010), as a student, Nietzsche had a brilliant future ahead of him based on his superb academic and intellectual capabilities. Despite the promising future awaiting him, he was still plagued by his frail health which was characterised by debilitating headaches which hampered his school attendance. I consider Nietzsche’s ill health to be a
significant factor in my exploration of his decision towards psychological well-being or becoming fully functioning. I believe that it suggests a high level of resilience on account of his need to actualisation.

Nietzsche was called up for military service in September 1867, where his physical shortcomings posed no obstacle to society as the looming threat of war was ever-present. Nietzsche was unfortunate in not being able to join the guards in Berlin and instead ended up in the mounted artillery in Naumburg (Young, 2010). His time of military service came to an abrupt end after he had unfortunate accident on his horse. Although he was deemed as the best horse rider amongst the new recruits, during March 1868 he had an accident whilst mounting his horse and badly injured his chest. The cause of the injury could have been due to Nietzsche’s myopia, as Young (2010) mentions that his sister, Elizabeth, stated that ”it made it hard for him [Nietzsche] to measure distances” (p.74). The injury left Nietzsche bedridden for ten days and pieces of bone came out of the puss in his chest (Young, 2010).

Regardless of the above-mentioned difficulties Nietzsche faced with his deteriorating health and his time serving in the war, he maintained a tendency to actualise his goals during his lifetime. Nietzsche stated that “illness made me see reason” to live a meaningful life (Large, 2007, p. 23). Subsequently, Nietzsche found a great deal of meaning in his writing and his journey of self-becoming. He boldly proclaimed in his book *Ecce Homo* (written in 1888 and published in 1908), which is widely considered to be his quasi-autobiography, his method to self-becoming (Large, 2007).

As cited in Large (2007, p.xvii), Nietzsche’s method to self-becoming is stated as follows:

For a self (on this understanding) is not something you just are – you have to achieve it, and keep achieving it over and over again. The ethic of self-becoming in Nietzsche is intimately connected to the strenuous ethic of self-overcoming that is, overcoming the parts of yourself that are not, ultimately, of yourself or do not, as Nietzsche puts it, belong to your task, your destiny. You must not turn your back on such extraneous, alien elements, though - you must have no regrets, must not disown any parts of yourself... rather, you must aim for absolutely inclusive self-ownership. The dynamic of self-overcoming ultimately involves a kind of incorporation, then: you incorporate what was alien into your task by affirming it and deeming it retrospectively to have been a necessary stage in your personal development.
Nietzsche’s method of self-becoming, and actualising one’s own potential by some means, echoes Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. Rogers (1961) observed and stated that, paradoxically, it is only when a person accepts themselves taking full ownership of their past actions that they are able to change or become who they want to be. The concept of self-acceptance in Rogers’ (1961) theory is synonymous with Nietzsche’s concept of an “inclusive self-ownership” that leads to self-becoming (Large, 2007, xvii).

Nietzsche’s efforts to overcome his physical difficulty could not prevent the mental breakdown awaiting him. Young (2010) mentions peculiar shifts in Nietzsche’s personality and sporadic states of euphoria that his friends experienced. The cause of Nietzsche’s mental breakdown has been widely debated by authors and a general consensus has been reached, for the most part. Young (2010) stated that Nietzsche visited brothels in Leipzig and Naples and the local brothel in Cologne, half an hour up the Rhine from Bonn University. It was and may still be commonly believed that Nietzsche contracted syphilis during his rendezvous at the brothels (Hollingdale, 1965).

Nietzsche’s wavering mental stability became apparent during the latter half of 1889. He began writing deranged letters to friends and public figures (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). His anomalous behaviour became more apparent to the people that lived with him and he played his piano throughout the day and night. On 3 January 1889, as is widely believed, Nietzsche left his lodgings and witnessed a cabman beating his horse. Nietzsche bore witness to this cruel event and flung himself across the horse’s’ neck and lost consciousness. Nietzsche was never the same after that day.

Subsequently, Jackson (2011) mentions that there were questions surrounding the intellectual credibility of Nietzsche’s work during the 1880s due to his wavering mental stability. Jackson suggests that there is a stable continuation within Nietzsche’s work.

In respect of Carl Rogers’ theory of personality, and unlike Erik Erikson’s (1968) psychosocial development theory, Rogers (1961) does not, per se, provide a substantial focus or detail regarding the early developmental stages of a person in his theory compared to his emphasis on the dynamics of personality. Qualities such as ”trusting in one’s own organism”, ”openness to experience” and ”existential living” were not clearly evident in Nietzsche as a child. I suggest that Rogers’ qualities may only become apparent from adolescence onwards. Therefore, the latter parts of Nietzsche’s life are more applicable to Rogers’ qualities. The limitations of the study will be discussed in Chapter 7.
Nevertheless, Nietzsche surely attempted by means of his philosophical writing to become a more authentic person that is, self-becoming. Nietzsche identified that the ideological pillars – being a western religious moral system - of his time, were not of a society aiming to achieve its highest potential. Nietzsche sought after a new way of living and thinking, a mode of thinking that supported development and change in society. Based on the data collected, Nietzsche could have fully actualised his own potential despite his illness and death at the age of forty-five. I acknowledge that Nietzsche’s life at first glance may appear to have been filled with suffering and sadness. Rogers (1961) asserts that it is a process to become fully functioning and not a fixed state of being. Based on the data collected, I suggest Nietzsche displayed the qualities Rogers sets forth as being fully functioning.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter which discussed the findings of the study attempted to present data that is congruent with Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. I discussed selected biographical data on Nietzsche’s life and to what extent his life adhered to the above-mentioned qualities of Rogers (1961). I have also alluded to aspects of Rogers’ theory which do not allow for exploration concerning Nietzsche as a person. The limitations concerning the study, a summary of the research, challenges faced, recommendations for future research will be given and a brief reflection will be discussed in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 7

Research Summary, Challenges of the Study, Value of the Study, Recommendations & Conclusion

Chapter Preview

This, the final chapter of the psychobiography of Friedrich Nietzsche, serves to draw together and summarize the findings and discussions of this study. This chapter also provides an overview of the challenges of the study, the value of the research and makes certain recommendations for possible future research.

7.1 Research Summary

This study has explored and discussed the life of Friedrich Nietzsche by utilizing Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. I, as the researcher, have discussed the rationale for using Nietzsche as a research subject and why I chose Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person as an appropriate theoretical framework. In addition to the above-mentioned, I developed a data collection and analysis grid which enabled the study to be more structured, trustworthy and auditable concerning the collection and analysis of the biographical data on Nietzsche’s life.

Rogers (1961) asserts that the process towards becoming is a ‘process’ and not a fixed state of being. Throughout Rogers’ therapeutic career he observed and identified specific qualities in his clients that responded positively to his person-centred psychotherapy. Rogers’ theory assumes that all persons have an innate tendency to develop their potential optimally. This is conditional, as described in Rogers’ therapy, on specific principles Rogers identified as central to his theory of the fully functioning person. These principles or central concepts should ideally exist between therapist and client or amongst people in a society or in the environment the person lives for example, a family.

I acknowledge that only certain aspects of Nietzsche’s life fit with Rogers’ view of a fully functioning person. As previously mentioned, Nietzsche’s early life and personality is incongruent with the qualities of Rogers’ (1961) principles of “openness to experience”, “trust in ones’ own organism”, and “existential living”. As researcher I conclude that Nietzsche, in the latter half of his life, satisfactorily achieved the qualities of ”existential living”, “trust in ones’ own organism” and “actualizing tendency” as a fully functioning
person. The quality of ‘creativity’ is evident throughout Nietzsche’s early life until his death. Ironically, at face value it does not appear that Nietzsche lived a satisfactory life as he struggled with his health, was not successful in marriage and lived a solitary life. But after a more detailed psychobiographical analysis of his life it does appear that he lived according to his own belief despite his perpetual frail health. Largely this relates to Rogers’ quality of actualizing tendency. Nietzsche displayed perseverance and was able to develop himself as a person and as a writer.

Nietzsche’s life can be characterized by a distinct contrast between his early religious upbringing and his latter existential context. I am of the opinion that Nietzsche’s life exhibits a positive process towards becoming the person who he believed he wanted to be in contrast to the environment he was born into. Nietzsche’s attempt to describe his process of becoming the person who he wished to become can be seen in his quasi-auto-biography *Ecce Homo* (1889) Large,(2007). Various Nietzschean authors such as Young (2010) and Large (2007) have questioned and debated the reliability of Nietzsche’s realization toward self-becoming described in *Ecce Homo* (1889) Large, (2007). The doubt about Nietzsche’s self-portrayal of becoming is largely based on his wavering mental instability. In Large’s (2007) introduction to *Ecce Homo*, he explores the lack of reliability and Nietzsche’s description of his philosophy and himself as person which is largely hyperbolized. However, authors such as Jackson (2011) assert that despite Nietzsche’s deteriorating health his philosophical tenets have a clear consistency. I, as the researcher, maintain that Nietzsche compellingly fulfilled the qualities of “existential living” and “trust in one’s own organism”. I also hold the opinion that these qualities are evident within Nietzsche as a person and also in his philosophical tenets.

Firstly, Nietzsche’s illnesses demanded that he seek appropriate health promoting climatic conditions as these periodically alleviated some of the ailments he experienced from early childhood. Subsequently, as cited in Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010), Nietzsche travelled through Europe and subsequently became a ‘wanderer’ between the towns and cities where he stayed. Fortunately this provided him with ample time to develop his writing and philosophy while simultaneously developing himself as a person. Young (2010) states that an essential element of Nietzsche’s philosophy was his love of fate – *Amor fati*, meaning that Nietzsche accepted that all situations (both positive and negative) in life and that all situations added value to one’s growth as a person. Nietzsche’s love of fate can be linked to Rogers’ quality of ”openness to experience”.
Secondly, Nietzsche’s “trust in his own organism” (Rogers, 1961) is also one of the two qualities he persuasively achieved. I am of the opinion that Nietzsche’s abandonment of Christianity and also the western moral system lead him to create his own belief system and way of living (Jackson, 2011). Nietzsche’s adult life and his philosophical work reflect a significant renunciation of the Christian environment he grew up in and his polemic against Christianity widely contributed to his reputation as a challenging philosopher (Hollingdale, 1965; Large, 2007; Young, 2010)).

I have arrived at the conclusion that Nietzsche satisfactorily displayed Rogers’ qualities of a fully functioning person. There appears to be a steadily increasing portrayal of Rogers’ qualities, such as “existential living”, “trust in one’s organism”, “openness to experience”, “creativity” and the “actualizing tendency”. The tendency towards self-actualization became more apparent after Nietzsche’s retirement as a professor of philology at Basel University (Hollingdale, 1965; Young, 2010). Nietzsche decided to pursue his interest in philosophy, which resulted in him articulating and publishing his philosophical works. Nietzsche satisfactorily displayed the quality of actualization, despite his suffering during his lifetime. Rogers (1961) described the actualizing quality in all living organisms as an innate tendency to rise above their contexts of living in order to develop and grow to their highest potential.

Therefore, I infer, on the basis of the aim of this psychobiography and the data collected, that Nietzsche’s latter life was displayed as living a fully functioning life. Nietzsche’s fictional character Zarathustra in his book, Thus spoke Zarathustra (1885,) has been considered by authors such as Hollingdale (1965) and Young (2010) to be his mouthpiece for his process of becoming. Nietzsche became mentally handicapped at age forty-five and remained in a state of mental paralysis for the last ten years of his life until his death in 1900.

This psychobiography explored and described Nietzsche’s life within a psychological framework, whilst at the same time critically engaging with the theory utilized. The study has illuminated Nietzsche’s life from early childhood to his death at age fifty-five and how his life correlates with certain qualities contained in the theory. This psychobiography adds to the available scholarly literature on the life of Nietzsche.
7.2 Challenges of the Study

Many of the challenges and limitations inherent to qualitative and psychobiographical research were discussed in Chapter 4 of the study. The ethical and preliminary considerations were identified and the steps that were taken to control the potential difficulties were dealt with in Chapter 4. Despite the efforts and attempts to curb all of the above-mentioned considerations there were certain aspects that emerged as challenges in the study. The current psychobiography of Nietzsche should be acknowledged to be constrained in part by it being a master’s dissertation produced in South Africa without the access to and availability of interviews with living relatives or knowledgeable experts on the life of Nietzsche. In addition, a significant amount of recent literature is available on Nietzsche’s philosophy but not on his life story. I, as the researcher, found this a challenge in the attempt to optimally triangulate diverse scholarly sources in collecting data on Nietzsche’s life. However, a few scholarly authors such as Hollingdale (1965), Young (2010), and Large (2007) were utilised as valuable sources based on their recognition in the field of academia as Nietzschean scholars. Furthermore, I had to be vigilant in distinguishing between Nietzsche as a person and his philosophy (philosopher). This challenge was initially considered to be of concern to me but with the development and use of a data collection and analysis grid I was able to maintain consistency in collecting data relevant to Nietzsche’s life and Rogers’ theory of the fully functioning person and only alluded to his philosophy when it offered some additional insight into Nietzsche’s life that was not available elsewhere. The use of Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person provided the study with an appropriate framework to examine Nietzsche’s life. However, as the researcher, it became apparent that Rogers’ concept of a fully functioning person was based mainly on his psychotherapeutic experiences. I acknowledge the possibility of a certain degree of bias concerning the theorists’ judgement in defining who and what a fully functioning person is. I am cognizant that the findings of the study regarding Nietzsche’s life according to Rogers’s qualities of a fully functioning person cannot be generalised but are only applicable to the current study.

7.3 Value of the Study

The study also provided an exploration of Carl Rogers’ theory as a whole and specifically his concept of the fully functioning person. I chose Rogers’ theory on the basis of its humanistic orientation as explained in Chapter 4. I also identified possible limitations pertaining to the specific theory and its possible impact on the study in Chapter 6 of the
discussion of the findings. The identification of challenges and shortcomings of the current study created opportunities to further improve future psychobiographical studies.

The study adds to the body of psychobiographical research in South Africa and of personality psychology. The study explored and described Nietzsche’s life within the context of Carl Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. As part of the methodology, the study also made use of a data collection and analysis grid which were discussed in Chapter 4.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

As previously mentioned in section 7.2, the scope of the study was that of a master’s dissertation. I encourage future psychobiographers to consider utilising semi-structured interviews on Nietzsche’s life with knowledgeable living persons, such as relatives, academics, psychologists, biographers, philosophers and historians as an alternative method. A second recommendation would be conduct an ecosystemic study that may possibly provide a multiplicity of descriptions compared to a singular theoretical study.

In addition, the exploration of alternative positive psychological theories, for example Martin Seligman’s theory on positive psychology, may add to the reliability of theory used to establish whether a person is fully functioning. As mentioned in section 7.2, I, as the researcher, am aware of the challenges pertaining to the current study and encourage future research.

7.5 Research Reflection

I constructed the current psychobiography of Friedrich Nietzsche. My initial introduction to Nietzsche’s philosophy occurred six years ago during my time as an undergraduate student. Nietzsche’s philosophy intrigued me by virtue of its daringness and the relentlessness of its challenge to all established modes of thinking, particularly Christianity and western morals. My personal interest in Nietzsche’s philosophy was instrumental in the changes that occurred in my life and thinking at that time. My views on existence and humankind are of a conscious decision, to adopt and to reject certain beliefs and to live my life accordingly.

Throughout this process of conducting research I have arrived at certain realisations about scientific research. From an epistemological perspective as a developing researcher I need to have an innate passion for acquiring and producing new knowledge. I have realised
that conducting scientific research is an acquired skill that needs to be nurtured over time. As a researcher I have also become aware of a duality within myself: I am firstly a person and secondly a researcher. As a person, I need to be aware of how I, as a person may positively and adversely affect the integrity and outcome of a study. As a person, throughout my development within different environmental, social, cultural, political and religious contexts and influences, I may uphold a particular paradigm of knowledge and its production or certain aspects of such paradigms that may not be in line with that of traditional science. As a developing researcher, I have become aware of the scientific paradigms in which science occurs and is accepted. I acknowledge that a factor such as researcher bias can only be controlled to a certain extent and that complete unbiased or objective knowledge regarding human beings cannot be upheld, due to the suggested duality of being firstly, a person and secondly, a researcher.

My initial interest in Nietzsche was based purely on his philosophy and not on him as a person. The purpose of the study was to explore whether or not he fulfilled his own philosophy and I was able to examine this question by means of Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person. I have come to study Nietzsche’s detailed life experiences that I have attributed to him as a person. I now understand Nietzsche’s philosophy and thinking more affectively knowing his life and how it possibly contributed to his way of thinking. I view Nietzsche now more as a person rather than the mythical philosopher I was introduced to six years ago.

As a developing researcher, this study has not only been positively challenging to me personally but has also inspired me to pursue further research projects within the field of psychology.

7.6 Conclusion

A psychobiographical research approach was employed to conduct the current qualitative research study. In light of the above-mentioned conclusions, and due consideration of the challenges and limitations of the study, I am of the opinion that the primary aim of the study has been largely achieved. The dissertation represents the exploration and description of Nietzsche’s life within a psychological framework. The aim to investigate whether Nietzsche lived a fully functioning life according Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person has been achieved.
In conclusion, this study suggests that Nietzsche lived a life filled with personal crises and ill health. Despite the challenges faced, Nietzsche directed himself towards a life of a fully functioning person. Nietzsche’s impetus towards self-becoming is also evident within his philosophical writings. This in my view, as researcher, reveals Nietzsche to have been an extraordinary individual who fitted Rogers’ (1961) theory of the fully functioning person.
REFERENCES


Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of


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