

# The Nietzsche Documentation Center in Naumburg / Saale

By **Andreas Urs Sommer**

Translated by Anthony K. Jensen

Friedrich Nietzsche is the philosopher of daring, the thinker of risk, who disdained every net and limitation. With the opening of the Nietzsche Documentation Center in Naumburg (October, 2010), all our colleagues –the city of Naumburg, the region Sachsen-Anhalt, and the scholars of the Friedrich Nietzsche Stiftung—have set themselves in the tradition of risk as well. It shows daring to look past short-term cost-benefit analyses, and to create not only a monument for those minds who seek what's new, but also to provide a gathering place for them, even a home. Naumburg can be proud of the fact that with the Nietzsche Documentation Center they have taken on the construction of the first public building since the fall of the Berlin Wall that was not dedicated to the government or to sports, but to the mind. Such a decision requires daring and a willingness to risk –rare commodities in Germany. Those who dare, those who are willing to risk are investing in the Nietzsche Documentation Center not just economically, but are investing for the maximization of intellectual profit.

With the immense collection of *Nietzscheana* of Richard Frank Krummel, the Center will be a veritable treasury of cultural history. Nietzsche's influence is spread through the most diverse spheres: in sociology as much as in literature, in the plastic arts and in music, in philosophy as much as in politics, in economics as much as in ecology. For that reason the history of the reception of Nietzsche is itself an essential part of the cultural history of the twentieth century. One could say without exaggeration that the Nietzsche Documentation Center will itself present in *nuce* the cultural history of modernity.

Nevertheless the Center should not be merely an archive of the past, but an incubator, a laboratory of the future. In it will be conceived the new and different—it should open a free space for thinking, and continue to encourage people to actively transform this free space. Friedrich Nietzsche was a philosopher of being-other, of thinking-other. Accordingly the Center should be a place where the freedom of thinking-other and being-other will be cultivated in opposition to our modern conceptual restrictions. The little city of Naumburg has the historic chance—perhaps its only chance—to present Germany with an intellectual heart. Together we must be mindful to preserve the daring that the creators and administration of the Nietzsche Documentation Center have shown against today's economic and intellectual pressures.

## **The Friedrich Nietzsche Foundation**

The Friedrich Nietzsche Foundation, the institutional side of the Nietzsche Documentation Center, is a civil foundation with an international format. Over eighty foundations from Denmark, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA have enabled the establishment of the Center through their contribution of capital stock. Among them one finds Nietzsche researchers and Nietzsche enthusiasts, philosophy publishing houses and Nietzsche-societies, businesses and interested individuals.

The Friedrich Nietzsche Foundation will set the Nietzsche-sites in Sachsen Anhalt as well as the activities of the Nietzsche Gesellschaft e.V. on a lasting and economically viable footing. Specifically, its aims are:

- Organizing and maintaining the Documentation Center in Naumburg, the Nietzsche House in Naumburg, and the Nietzsche Memorial in Röcken.
- Developing of the complete works of Nietzsche, its reception, and the inventory of the Center through the construction and preservation of an innovative communication and information network.

- Organizing interdisciplinary scholarly meetings, congresses, and conferences, and allocating the Friedrich Nietzsche Prize under the auspices of Sachsen-Anhalt.
- Supporting publications.
- Collaborating with scholarly and cultural institutions.
- Facilitating creative and scholarly exchange at the regional, national, and international level.

## **The Nietzsche Documentation Center**

The city of Naumburg laid the cornerstone of the Nietzsche Documentation Center by its acquisition of the library of Richard Frank Krummel, the most extensive private collection of the historical reception of Nietzsche anywhere in the world. The collection primarily consists in the printed documents of more than a century of Nietzsche reception. The Center's task is to preserve these documents, to archive and process them in a scholarly way, and to make them available to an interested public. The Center seeks to encompass the Nietzsche reception in its entire breadth, to develop it, and thereby lay the foundation for a better understanding of his work and influence. This project, then, is just the beginning of our future engagement with Nietzsche's thinking. In the future, the collection will be expanded by other artifacts like artworks, sound clips, film, digital media, and pieces of pop culture.

A complete digital catalog of the contents of these library, archive, and restoration materials is indispensable to the Center. The Nietzsche-Gesellschaft is an important partner for this much-needed scholarly preparation and development, and also assists in the continual conceptualization of the Center's activities. Electronically formatting the Krummel library will enable the construction and maintenance of an electronically-based communication and information network.

The Nietzsche Documentation Center supports conventional and electronic publications about the life, work, and influence of Nietzsche, and to that end works in conjunction with various scholarly and cultural institutions. This also creates possibilities for artistic and scholarly exchange on regional, national, and international levels. Through an extensive online offering, it will begin a stimulating international exchange of ideas, one that will inspire visitors to come to Naumburg and attract Nietzsche-fans from around the world to come to his homeland.

Any reservations about using the available resources should be minimized. Students, graduates, and even high school students will be encouraged to use the space. Yet it is also essential to attract scholars who will work with the provisions of the Center in a scholarly way. As a medium-range goal, a fellowship program will be created to support scholars-in-residence intellectually, financially, and logistically.

Apart from these collecting and developing-duties, it is essential to display the Center's collection. This will take place both on-site and online. Exhibition and presentation spaces will be available in the Center in order to make part of the collection open to the public.

The Nietzsche Documentation Center also endeavors to be an important center for the public and enliven its cultural life. Public outreach will be closely bound to the documentary tasks of the Center, through cultural exhibitions such as readings, discussion circles, and presentations. It will host regular meetings, small-scale seminars, etc., that examine both Nietzsche's thinking in its own context and his philosophical legacy. In addition, the Center can offer educational trips 'in Nietzsche's footsteps' and organize seminars, in possible cooperation with 'Cultural Trip Enterprises' and other international programs from abroad. The jubilee year of 2000 demonstrated that there is considerable interest in these sorts of activities.

Looking forward, a central aim of the Nietzsche Documentation Center is further collaboration with foreign-based Nietzsche societies and research centers, among them, those in Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, the US, and Brazil.

The Nietzsche Documentation Center is now open. Now we must fill it with life. Only then can it become a true bounty for the intellectual world.

<http://www.friedrich-nietzsche-stiftung.de/>