

Tribhuvan University

How Does Zarathustra Kill God? : A Rhetorical Analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche's

Thus Spake Zarathustra

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.

In the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

By

Gatha Rijal

Symbol No: 000523

Regd. No: 6-2-432-16-2010

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

November 2017

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Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Gatha Rijal has completed her thesis entitled “How Does Zarathustra Kill God?: A Rhetorical Analysis of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*” under my supervision. She carried out the thesis from September to November 2017. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Prof. Krishna Chandra Sharma (Ph. D.)

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled “How Does Zarathustra Kill God?: A Rhetorical Analysis of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Gatha Rijal, has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Head of the Department
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Gatha Rijal

Abstract

'God is dead' is a statement that has always been associated with Nietzsche's Zarathustra even though he was not Nietzsche's original spokesperson. So this research focuses on how Zarathustra says what he says that he ends up not only with the credit of declaring God's death but is also able to persuade the world that God is indeed dead. This dissertation employs rhetorical analysis to meet these research aims. By observing what Zarathustra says and how he says it, this research comes to the conclusion that even though Zarathustra is not the one to declare God's death, he is the first person to accept it. With his acceptance and insistence upon God's demise, he kills God. With his celebration of God's death as good riddance, he kills God. With his roaring laughter at our ass-worshipping, he kills God. And thus, Nietzsche is able to persuade his audience about God's death by whispering his message into Zarathustra's ears which when finds Zarathustra's voice, sounds like a thunder.

Key words: *God is dead, Zarathustra, Superman, Eternal recurrence, Rhetorical analysis, Persuasion, Ethos, Pathos, Logos and Kairos*

How Does Zarathustra Kill God?: A Rhetorical Analysis of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

Thus Spake Zarathustra is considered as Nietzsche's *magnum opus*. Through this book, he not only shook the foundation of western Christian civilization with the declaration of "God is dead" but also expanded his concepts of 'Will to Power', 'Eternal recurrence' and 'Superman'. Nietzsche himself claims: "Among my writings my Zarathustra stands by itself. With this book I have given mankind the greatest gift it has ever been given" ("Ecce" 9). This research uncovers that "gift" of Nietzsche through the rhetorical analysis of the text with a focus on the death of god proclamation.

Thus Spake Zarathustra recounts the story of Zarathustra who had left his home at the age of thirty in order to live a life of meditation in the mountains. Like the sun that would not be happy if it had no one to shine for, Zarathustra after ten years of meditation and life of solitude, decides once again to descend to the realm of men in order to share what he has learned. Divided into four sections, each part of this book presents a different stage in Zarathustra's life and teaching.

The original Zarathustra (also known as Zoroaster) was a Persian prophet who received a divine revelation at the age of thirty and his teachings are believed to be the foundation of a religious movement called Zoroastrianism, a tradition that largely dominated Persia until the mid-7th century CE (Violatti). Critics including Carl Jung believe that Nietzsche created his Zarathustra in opposition to the original one, one who preaches against "the moral objectivity" professed by the Persian prophet (qtd. in Sandis). Constantine Sandis believes "Zoroaster was the first to commit 'the error' of morality: consequently, Zarathustra had to be the first to repudiate it. That is why,

Nietzsche chose Zarathustra as his prophet". Zoroaster was the one to "give birth" to monotheism so he had to be the one to declare the death of God.

However, Zarathustra is not Nietzsche's first spokesperson to declare god's death. Nietzsche chooses a mad man to proclaim God's death in his book *The Gay Science* published in 1882. There is a madman looking for God with a lantern in broad day light. Some atheists mock at him by asking: "Has he been lost? Did he lose his way like a child? Is he hiding? Is he afraid of us?" To which he replies, "I'll tell you! We have killed him – you and I! We are all his murderers" (119). In his declaration there is a kind of regret, some sort of guilt for murdering god. He adds, "The holiest and the mightiest thing the world has ever possessed has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood from us?" (120).

However, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, we do not find this tone of regret. God's death becomes a cause for celebration, celebration of the birth of Superman: "Dead are all the Gods: now do we desire the Superman to live" (71). So, how does Nietzsche shift his tone of regret to one of celebration and why? Why do people associate God's death with Zarathustra and not the madman? How does Zarathustra declare the death of God that he steals the limelight from the madman?

Nietzsche's proclamation is not new to the students of literature. However, it was a near shock experience for me to know that the "God is dead" statement does not originally belong to Zarathustra as I had believed; as I had read in my course books. So, why is it so? When the madman and Zarathustra both are spokespersons of Nietzsche and are saying the same thing how does Zarathustra end up with the credit of declaring God's death? There must be something in the way he declares it that overshadows Nietzsche's previous proclamation. If so then, how does Zarathustra

speak in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*? How does he make it believable that God is indeed dead? And more importantly, what made the western intelligentsia believe him?

Regarding the proclamation “death of God”, David B. Allison asserts that this declaration made it possible for Nietzsche to introduce the notion of will, which he clarifies as “a renewed and restored sense of human agency and autonomy” (126). By denying the reality of a supernatural existence and the authority that regulated morality, “the teachings of "sin," "redemption" from sin, "absolution" of "guilt," and the "salvation" of the "soul" suddenly become weightless, meaningless” and thus the highest affirmation of life and the joyful acceptance of the eternal return becomes possible (127). Allison implies that Nietzsche celebrates the shift from the grip of moral authority to human agency made possible by the death of God.

In contrast, Maurice Blanchot claims that Nietzsche’s celebration is only an appearance. He observes, “Nietzsche with a joy only he felt so purely and expressed so fully, has seen in this movement of infinite negation, which withdraws every solid foundation from us, the opening onto a suddenly boundless space of knowledge” (121). It seems as if we are “sheltered” from Nihilism. But in truth, we lie “at the heart” of Nihilism (126). To make Nietzsche’s intention clear, he quotes Nietzsche in his “incisive simplicity”: “let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: ‘the eternal recurrence’. This is the most extreme form of nihilism” (126). Blanchot and Allison interpret Nietzsche’s proclamation in two opposite directions.

“Friedrich Nietzsche may well be the most misunderstood philosopher of all time,” this is how Thomas Wayne begins his translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1). Many critics including Michael Harr, Martin Heidegger and Sarah Kofman agree

with this statement. They are of the opinion that Nietzsche's idiosyncratic use of language makes it difficult to grasp what he is saying. However, Nietzsche himself does not mind this misunderstanding. When Doctor Henrich Von Stein complained that he did not understand a single line of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche replied that that is how it should be, "to have understood six sentences from it, to have lived them, raises one to a higher plane of the mortal than "modern" men could attain (40). But what is it that makes it difficult to understand Nietzsche?

Michael Harr believes that Nietzsche "seduces" his readers with an "apparent ease with which he can be read" (5). Also it seems like his writings lack "technical vocabulary" (5). However, his "strange and ambiguous" language as opposed to the "traditional language of philosophy" makes him inaccessible. In opposition to the tradition and language of philosophy, Nietzsche establishes his own language "designed for the purpose of subversion" (6). On the one hand, he uses "current metaphysical oppositions" but "with a view of eradicating and abolishing" these very distinctions. On the other, his own vocabularies (Will to Power, Nihilism, Overman, Eternal return) "elude conceptual logic" (6). Harr blames it on Nietzsche's language.

Martin Heidegger might agree with him. He believes that the book begins to be misread from the very title itself: *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*. To find out who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra, he begins with the subtitle of the book. Heidegger thinks "for everyone" does not just mean "for anybody": "it is for each man as man, insofar as his essential nature become at any given time an object worthy of his thought" (64). Similarly, he asserts "for no one" implies, "for none of the idle curious who come drifting in from everywhere, who merely intoxicate themselves with isolated fragments and particular aphorisms from this work . . ." (64). He believes that this has come true in the "reverse sense" as it has "become

a book for every man". He goes on to make the claim: ". . . to this day no thinker has appeared who is equal to its fundamental thought and able to assess the full significance of its origin" (64). God help the person who wants to do a thesis on Nietzsche!

Drawing on these contradictory claims regarding Nietzsche, the only thing that I can deduce is that all the other concepts of Nietzsche: 'will to power', 'eternal recurrence', 'superman', 'going beyond good and evil', have something or the other to do with his declaration of God's death. Still, there remains a need to recognize what it is that makes Zarathustra's speech credible enough to insinuate all these debates.

This research, thus, explores how Zarathustra says what he says and shakes the foundation of Western Christian philosophy. With the help of rhetorical analysis, it critically examines the text as well as its context to comprehend Nietzsche's death of God thesis and its aftermath. By analyzing the components of his proclamation, I believe readers will be better able to understand not only Nietzsche and his philosophy but also be able to uncover whatever Nietzsche found out regarding God that still escapes their understanding.

I have consulted Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruskiewicz, Mark Garrett Longaker and Jeffrey Walker and their approach to rhetorical analysis. According to Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruskiewicz, rhetorical analysis is a close reading of a text to find how and whether it works to persuade (104). Rhetorical analysis studies the purpose, the audience, the credibility of the person making the claim, the social, political, historical, cultural contexts behind the claim, the components of the argument (the appeals and techniques used, their arrangement, the language, style and shape of the argument) and the way they work together to persuade or move its

audience. Thus, it provides most of the equipment necessary to analyze the strategies employed by Nietzsche while declaring the death of god. By studying what Zarathustra says and how he says it, I am better able to understand the power of his speech over the western intelligentsia.

I had also considered doing a Toulmin analysis regarding Nietzsche's proclamation but Nietzsche uses such short sentences that it makes it difficult to perform a Toulmin analysis on Zarathustra's declarations. Nietzsche's thoughts are already so twisted that we cannot twist them any further to suit our analysis. Everything Zarathustra utters is like a *sententia* – “the resonant, proverb-like declaration of an idea as if it were deep wisdom, fundamental truth, or traditional belief” (Longaker and Walker 154). Here is an example from among hundreds such statements: “In your friend you should possess your best enemy. Your heart should feel closest to him when you oppose him (83). He states his claims as self-sufficient entities. It is difficult to find the datum, claim, warrant and reason. He does not need them because he somehow makes the audience believe in his logic, in the truth in his statements that do not need any further explanations. He does not need evidence. He does not qualify them because he does not intend to limit them. He does not back down, he does not hide from what he has just said. He does not respond to possible questions and objections because he does not anticipate them.

Somewhere down the book Nietzsche mentions, “It is the stillest words which bring the storm. Thoughts that come on dove's footsteps guide the world” (“Thus” 168). And that is how Zarathustra kills God – simply with his words.

First time Zarathustra mentions the death of God, he makes it appear as a common knowledge. As he is descending from the hills, he meets an old man. After his departure, he mentions to his heart, “Could it be possible! This old saint has not

yet heard in his forest that God is dead!” (41). His statement implies that everybody else has known about this fact for some time and this old saint, since he has been living in the forest, he has not yet heard about it. Zarathustra is not just surprised but shows disbelief because of this lack of information on the part of the old man with the exclamation mark at the end of the phrase “Could it be possible!”. Nietzsche from the very beginning creates this context that the world inside the book is one where it is a common knowledge to people that God is no more alive. And readers carry this feeling as they turn the pages.

So, to begin with, if the God is dead, then, how did he die? Was it a murder? Or a timely death of an aged man? It is difficult to answer because it is not just one death that kills God in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He dies various deaths. First, the devil informs Zarathustra that “god has died of his pity for man” (114). Then he himself declares, “the old gods laughed themselves to death!” (201). And then, when the old Pope mentions that he served god to his last, Zarathustra asks, “Do you know how he died? Is it true what they say, that pity choked him, ‘that he saw how man hung on the Cross and could not endure it, that love for man became his Hell and at last his death?’”(272). However, the old Pope does not answer at that moment, but looks shyly away. But later on, he asserts that God suffocated through his excessive pity (273). Then again, when he meets the ugliest man, Zarathustra accuses him of God’s murder, “you could not endure him who saw you – who saw you unblinking and through and through, you ugliest man! You took revenge upon this witness!” (276). To which, the ugliest man replies:

But he – had to die: he looked with eyes that saw everything – he saw the depths and abysses of man, all man’s hidden disgrace and ugliness. His pity knew no shame: he crept into my dirtiest corners. This most curious, most

over-impertunate, over compassionate god had to die . . . The god who saw everything, even man: this god had to die! Man could not endure that such a witness should live! (278-9)

Readers can deduce two major details from these deaths. One is that Gods had a merry end. And another, they met a tragic one. The happy death suits the God. This is how one would wish a God to die, if he ever had to. But the tragic one - one where he “chokes” and “suffocates” is not something that suits a god. It is not a god’s death. He should have a peaceful end. His death does not even suit a righteous person, far from matching a god’s end. He deserved better. But because of man, he dies a gruesome death. Man led him to this calamity. Readers can notice that the adjective that comes before man is “ugliest”. It is man, the ugliest being who murders God.

His confession implies that god “had to die” because he committed a crime – he became a witness to man’s reality. Man is disgraceful. Man is ugly but this disgrace is a hidden one which god tried to see. He was “over-compassionate”. Compassion was his crime. His pity knew no shame. Pity was his crime. Man could not endure that such a witness should live – such a witness who could bestow compassion even after knowing what man is. Man could not forgive such kindness towards his ugliness. Nietzsche plays with human pathos by painting these images of “choking” and “suffocating”. By pointing the finger at them, he is trying to make them feel guilty of their crime. And they do shoulder the weight of god’s death going through the pages.

However, guilt is not the only emotion he evokes. There is celebration too. With the death of God, he celebrates the birth of Superman: “All gods are dead: now we want the Superman to live – let this be our last will . . .” (104). He believes that God is “a supposition”, so he wants readers to get over this “imagined” idea and

replace it with another one of the Superman (110). He demands, “Could you create a God? So be silent about all gods! But you could surely create the Superman” (110). The God that is dead was an inherited god, he was imposed upon human beings. It was a supposition, a fantasy of their ancestors but now, Zarathustra assures that they can actually create the Superman. It will be the result of their own creation and their own will.

Before moving further, I think the most important question readers need to consider is why Zarathustra wants God to be dead: the purpose behind Nietzsche’s declaration. There are quite a few reasons why Zarathustra rejoices in God’s death. He uses an allegory to complain against God’s imperfection while creating man. He compares God to a potter and claims, “He had too many failures, this potter who had not learned his craft! But that he took vengeance on his pots and creations because they had turned out badly –that was a sin against good taste. Away with such a god! Better no god, better to produce destiny on one’s own account, better to be a fool. Better to be God oneself!” (274). He begins his accusation with the insistence upon God’s “too many” failures. He foregrounds this idea that God was imperfect. So the death of such a failure was good riddance. Instead why not consider the idea of being a God oneself: “but to reveal my heart entirely to you, friends, if there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god! Therefore there are no gods” (110). Something less than a God is not acceptable to him.

And man, he despises the most. Readers can feel his hatred towards man in his diction. He calls man “a polluted river”, “a disease of the earth” (153), “the cruelest animal”, who enjoys tragedies, bull fights and crucifixion (235). He has scattered these images about men throughout the text as if he does not want readers to forget even for a few pages in their reading that man is just “a laughing stock, a painful

embarrassment” in front of the superman (42); “a dark cloud” whose “lightening” is the superman” (49). He again and again repeats the idea that man is just a “bridge” (44) and humans need to “overcome” this stage and become Supermen (65).

He supposes that Superman is “the meaning of our existence” (49) because he is a “fellow creator”, “a companion” to the creator himself. The belief in man that he should be despised instead of being loved is what made him kill god. Man’s inability to love himself as he is led to god’s death. Thus Zarathustra’s insistence upon superman – a man who is proud of himself – who is god like – who is devoid of pity. With Superman, he not just shows readers the hope of overcoming their human state but his vision of Superman even overcomes the absence of God: “The beauty of the superman came to me as a shadow. Ah, my brothers! What are the gods to me now?” (112).

His disagreement with god also seems to be in the fact that a single god insists on being sufficient for all. He detests God because he calls it “evil and misanthropic, all this teaching about the one and the perfect and the unmoved and the sufficient and the intransitory. For him, all that is “intransitory” is just an “image” (111). This imagined God that people have been worshipping is whom he is against. He also does not believe that one God can suffice all.

Moreover, he opposes god because of the promise of the afterworld that comes along with the image of God. Zarathustra believes “it was the sick and dying who despised the body and the earth and invented the things of heaven” (59). He thinks that the “sickly ones invent fables and long for God” (60). Rather than criticizing god, he criticizes the belief on God. He criticizes those who believe in this god that they have created because of their impotence. Because of their inability to enjoy their lives on earth, they create the fables of the after world. He calls them “despisers of life” and

“poisoners” who show “super terrestrial” hopes (42). He even scolds those who call themselves the virtuous ones: “You want to be paid as well, you virtuous! Do you want reward for the virtue and heaven for earth and eternity for your today? And are you now angry with me because I teach that there is neither reward-giver nor paymaster? And truly, I do not even teach that virtue is its own reward” (117). This greed of the afterworld, he loathes. His word choice expresses reproach, almost hatred, towards the sickly ones and ultimately is trying to lead the readers to think that longing for god is a kind of sickness.

He also criticizes those who profess that all men are equal before God. He calls them “tarantulas” who poison us with the teachings of revenge (123). He does not believe in this so called “equality”: “Before god! But now this god has died! You higher men, this god was your greatest danger. Only since he had lain in the grave have you again been resurrected. Only now does the great noontide come, only now does the Higher man become – lord and master!” (297). He insists on this freedom, this claim upon their own lives that humans now have since god’s departure. So he shows relief that god has died. Readers can almost hear him sigh with peace. He declares it with such certainty that it somehow rings a bell within them. The only problem is that for them, it sounds like an alarm and for Zarathustra it calls for celebration. They panic like prisoners, clinging to their chains, afraid of freedom.

Devotion to god, he finds cowardly: “You know it well: the cowardly devil in you who would like to clasp his hands and to fold his arms and to take it easier: - it was this cowardly devil who persuaded you: ‘There is a God!’” (199). He sees himself as a “convalescent”, recovering from his belief on God. He mentions, “Now to me, the convalescent, it would be suffering and torment to believe in such phantoms: it would be suffering to me now and humiliation” (59). Such strong words

as “humiliation” and “suffering” exhibit the extremities of his thoughts regarding those who still do believe in God’s existence. However, it should also be noted that he is assuring his audience that he had also once placed his faith on the afterworld – on God but now, he has overcome it so it is possible for them too.

To Zarathustra, God worshipping equals to the worshipping of the ass. He reveals his disgust through the higher men, whom readers find during the end of the book, worshipping an ass as a God. The Pope claims: “Better to worship god in this shape than in no shape at all!”, whereas the Conscientious man confesses: “I may not believe in god, perhaps: but it is certain that god seems to me most worthy belief in this form” (323-4). By showing that the “higher men” can worship even an ass as God, he mocks the blind faith on the prophets and their preaching.

The ugliest man once reminds Zarathustra that he who wants to kill most thoroughly – laughs: “one kills, not by anger but by laughter” (324). This is exactly how Zarathustra kills God – by laughing at him, by laughing at human belief, at human ass worshipping.

But why should his laughter affect the readers? Why does such a simple phrase “God is dead” tremble them? Why cannot they ignore him? Why cannot they say it even today, after all these years, without an apprehension of doing something wrong? God is dead means that once there was a god. To believe in his existence and then to declare his death is more dangerous a statement than not to believe in him at all. And that too to add that god died out of his pity for man - that he choked on his own sympathy, what does it say about man? It implies that there was once a god but humans killed him, with their ugliness. They could not tolerate his compassion over their ugliness. Because of this guilt that Zarathustra evokes in them all, his simple words shake them.

But why Zarathustra? He is just a fictional character. He is a figment of Nietzsche's imagination. And yet his declaration of god's death, after so many years, is still earth-shaking. Why does god's demise from Zarathustra's mouth create such a hullabaloo? And more importantly, why does Nietzsche choose Zarathustra?

Zarathustra needs no introduction. Nietzsche does not need to establish his ethos. His readers already know who Zarathustra is and what God's death means from his mouth. He was surely not innocent in his choice. In his own words, "Zarathustra created this most fateful of errors of morality: consequently he must also be the first to recognize it as such" ("Ecce" 92). The "self-overcoming of morality through truthfulness", "the self-overcoming of the moralist into his opposite" is what Nietzsche wants from Zarathustra.

For Allison, the death of god proclamation from Zarathustra means "What had been implanted in human nature for millennia upon end-namely, the belief in a metaphysically conceived morality operating as "the very wheel in the machinery of things" is henceforth withdrawn upon the announcement of God's death, by the figure of Zarathustra himself" (127).

Nietzsche plays with Zarathustra's ethos. Zarathustra, being a prophet, is doing what prophets do: singing the hymn of God. It is just that in this case, the hymn has turned out to be a funeral song. Even though he repeats what the mad man had declared in *The Gay Science*, Zarathustra is more trustworthy. Being a prophet, talks about God suits him. It is appropriate in the rhetorical situation. He even makes the readers believe in statements like "Now a God dances within me" (69). They do not laugh at this statement coming from his mouth. If it had been someone else, they would have declared him mad.

And in this case, from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, God's death seems even more dangerous because once it was Zarathustra who gave birth to monotheism, who professed moral objectivity. He has willed Zarathustra again in the eternal recurrence to rectify his mistake, to reject and replace his earlier ideas with the opposite ones: "I spoke my teaching, I broke upon my teaching: thus my eternal fate will have it – as prophet do I perish!" (238). It is not just Zarathustra who is speaking. It is also Nietzsche making these assertions through his prophet in the nineteenth century. We should not forget that he is a prophet in the hand of a self dramatized "immoralist".

Zarathustra is disposing the gods that were created. He is attacking them with his laughter. So those who still cling to this "illusiv" God and foster this image of the one and only are offended and are shaken to their core. More than criticizing God, he attacks these people. Of Priests, he says: "They knew no other way of loving their God than by nailing men to the Cross!" (115). Scholars he calls "gravediggers" who "like those who stand in the street and stare at the people passing by, so they too wait and stare at thoughts that others have thought" (147). Church he calls, "the sweet-smelling caves" (115). Market place he terms as "mob", a place where the "poisonous flies sting" us (79).

However, something even more troubling is the fact that it is not true that Zarathustra does not believe in God at all. He mentions that he should believe only in a god "who understood how to dance" (67). This phrase looks like an understatement, but is it? Is it not that simple to be a God? Are not humans imposing too much expectation on their omnipresent omniscient omnipotent God? Maybe this is a discussion for some other time. But what Zarathustra's statement tells the readers is that he does not completely disregard the existence of God. His God is very much alive and dancing even in his death. The following proclamation makes it even

clearer, “Yes, I am Zarathustra the godless! I am Zarathustra the godless, who says ‘who is more godless than I, that I may rejoice in his teaching?’” (191). He has killed other people’s god but his god is living. He is godless and yet full of him.

Zarathustra’s god is still alive but the image of god has shattered to pieces. It was an image thus the shattering. And readers feel this cold in their heart because of their own guilt. Their God is just an image and they know that and when he brings this unconscious detail to their mind, they are unable to accept it. He is the voice that speaks the truth that they cannot even bring to words but have known all along. They had been feeling the same but were afraid to confess it even to their own selves.

And this appeal to their emotions becomes even stronger because of its interconnectedness with the logos of the text. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche mentions that the “fundamental conception” of the work is the idea of eternal recurrence (67). With god gone, so is the promise of heaven, so humans will be repeating this life again and again, the same day to day activities, the same suffering, the same hope in their eyes for the future that is never to come. Unless they become supermen and rejoice life, fill life with dancing and laughter, there is no redemption from this pitiful existence, from this midlife between apes and the superman. There is no heaven there is only earth and earth they have never learned to enjoy, to live. They are always dreaming of the after world when there is no such thing. This message mixed with the ethos of Zarathustra, becomes a warning to the whole humanity. God’s death has liberated the humans from their bondage, thus they can now become god themselves in the form of the superman, otherwise in the cycle of eternal recurrence they will be trapped in their pitiful human existence, caught up between the animals and their heavenly dreams.

Thus he insists, “God has died: now we desire – that the superman shall live” (297). There is not just the tone of rejoicing in his statement but also the fact that he

does not say “I” but “we”. It is not just Zarathustra who is rejoicing in God’s death, he is also making his audience participate in his celebration. He is transferring the anticipation for the Superman on their shoulders as well.

Regarding Superman, Martin Heidegger asks: “But where does the call of distress for the superman come from? Why does prevailing man no longer suffice?” (67). The answer he provides is “because Nietzsche recognizes the historical moment in which man prepares to assume dominion over the whole earth” (67). So he wants readers to contemplate: “Is man as man in his nature till now, prepared to assume dominion over the whole earth? If not, what must happen to man as he is so that he may be able to subject the earth and thereby fulfill the word of an old testament? Must man as he is, then, not be brought beyond himself if he is to fulfill this task?” (67).

Hollingdale answers him by saying “to be sure, only the Superman could be so well-disposed towards his life as to want it again and again forever: but that precisely is the reason for willing his creation. The joy of the superman in being as he is, now and ever, is the ultimate sublimation of the will to power and the final overcoming of an otherwise inexorable and inevitable nihilism” (27). And readers get a glimpse of this Superman in Zarathustra.

Heidegger, in his attempt to discover the identity of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, comes to the conclusion that Zarathustra is the advocate of life, of suffering, of the circle and at the same time, the teacher of the Eternal Recurrence of the same and of the superman. He does not think that Zarathustra teaches two different things as the teacher of the Eternal Recurrence and the Superman: “What he teaches belongs internally together, because each demands the other in response.” He explains, “Zarathustra teaches the superman because he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence. But conversely as well, Zarathustra teaches the eternal recurrence because he is the

teacher of superman” (75). Zarathustra is ultimately asking readers to believe in the death of God and in the birth of the Superman. To become Supermen, to stop dreaming of the afterworld and to enjoy life on earth to the extent that they can say yes to it every time – so that they can will it in the eternal recurrence of the same without any regret, want it again and again, times without number.

Regarding the structure of an argument, Longaker and Walker quote Aristotle to say “if a person is not simply paralyzed by conflicting ideas, his choice between these competing arguments will be determined by which premises exert the most energy in his consciousness – which ones seem most vivid, most prominent, most urgent?” (102-3). In this case it is easier for readers to believe in the death of god but the promise of the superman, they cannot picture. So they hang in the middle without a God to hold on to or a Superman to climb over.

But why is Nietzsche making Zarathustra say these things in this moment in history? Nietzsche puts forth two reasons: one, he mentions “alas, now nothing can satisfy us anymore! . . . With such outlooks before us and such a ravenous hunger in science and conscience, how could we still be satisfied with present-day men?” (“Ecce” 70). Another, he recognizes at this moment an “ideal of a spirit who . . . plays with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, godly; for whom the highest thing upon which the people rightly base their standard of value would already amount to a danger, a decay, a degradation, or, at the very least, a relaxation, a blindness, a temporary self-forgetting” (70). So it would only be fitting to agree with what Allison points out to be the *kairos* of this book. He says it was Nietzsche’s “recognition” that the “very foundations of Western culture were being withdrawn: the God of the West, who for millennia had served humanity as the font of traditional faith, as the creative source of all being, truth, and moral value, was no longer

credible to the scientifically educated classes of late nineteenth-century Europe” that led him towards his conclusion (viii).

Now, let us have a look at the presentational aspect of the rhetoric and the effect it has on the persuasive quality of the text. Nietzsche himself seems to take the book’s style as “mythic” (Allison 111). Most critics take it as “an anti-gospel” or “anti-bible” (Shapiro). Some even say that its parts parody the Last Supper and Plato's Symposium, Luther’s sermons and biblical translations” (Magnus and Higgins)”, “Zoroaster’s pronouncements in the *Zend Avesta*”, “the New Testament”, “ the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels” and even “suggestive of the Buddha or of a Hindu sage” (Allison).

Shapiro points out that “the rhetorical organization which governs the varying textures of the work- can be designated (in part) as parable, poetry, song, teaching, and silence” (170). He asserts that the main divisions of the work are, successively, metaphorical, metonymical, synecdochic, and ironic (170). He quotes Paul de Man who believes such a rich cluster of imagery "is itself a sign of divine absence, and the conscious use of poetic imagery an admission of this absence” (171).

Similarly, Hollingdale opines, “It is clear that the rhetorical-oratorical is something Nietzsche was impelled to, gave way to and has got rid of in Zarathustra: the eruption of words, metaphors, figures and word-play suggests an eruption of feeling” (11).

However, I guess Nietzsche would have denied all of these. Regarding his inspiration for composing Zarathustra he explains,

. . . one is merely the incarnation, merely the mouthpiece, merely the medium of superior powers . . . the concept of revelation, in the sense that all of a sudden, with inexpressible certainty and subtlety, something becomes visible,

audible that it shakes and upsets one to the core, simply describes the facts of the case. One hears, one does not seek; one takes, one does not ask who gives; a thought flashes up like lightning, out of necessity, with no hesitancy in its form – I have never had any choice about it . . . Everything takes place in the highest degree involuntarily, but as if in a storm of liberating feelings, of unconditional being, of powerfulness, of godliness... the involuntary quality of the image, of the simile is most strange; one no longer has any idea what is image, what is simile; everything offers itself as the next, the truest, the simplest expression”. (71)

With these lines, he explains how the text gets written on its own. A writer is simply a vehicle to bring the inspirational force in pages. This book is the perfect example of this.

So praising his Zarathustra, he goes on to declare that “a Goethe, a Shakespeare would be unable to breathe for even a moment . . . that Dante, compared to Zarathustra, is merely a believer and not one who first creates the truth, a world-governing spirit, a destiny, that the poets of the Veda are not even worthy to unloose the latchet of a Zarathustra’s shoes” (74).

He clarifies his use of language by saying that his language expresses the Dionysus spirit: “What language will such a spirit speak when he speaks to himself alone? The language of the dithyramb . . . The like of this has never been written, never been felt, never been suffered; thus suffers a god, a Dionysus” (76). So the “Sentences come trembling with passion; rhetoric become music; lightning-bolts hurled ahead toward hitherto undivined futures” (74).

And verily, there are no fillers to disturb his confidence in his speech. He does not hesitate to declare anything. Nothing obscures his meanings. His speech stands

apart from the ordinary and the bland. It has individuality, can convince the reader that it is indeed Zarathustra making these declarations. He creates the speech worthy of the prophet. His speech is grand in style: the first requirement of the grand style is that the speaker must be saying something that feels to the audience like an important or transcendent truth (Longaker and Walker 163). And Zarathustra's sayings echo with truth. No apostrophe interrupts his ongoing discourse: he does not deliver any aside to another audience, not even to God. His target is clear. He does not need to personify the voice of any other historical or imaginary character. Whatever he says is his own and only. He is Nietzsche's Zarathustra; case closed. No *aporia* hampers his speech. He does not pause amid his vocalization. No parenthesis creates digression from what he has been saying. There is no *enallage*: no deliberate grammatical mistake.

I have to confess, that for me, the most difficult aspect of carrying out this rhetorical analysis was to determine the audience of the text. Whom is he trying to convince about God's death? Without doubt, the primary audience inside the book is Zarathustra's heart. He converses with his solitude more than he converses with other people.

Shapiro also notes the often "abruptly shifts from external address to inner soliloquy" (172). Explaining about the third part of the book, he further mentions, "The true homecoming is not simply to return to one's geographical origins but to enjoy solitude (*Einsamkeit*). The speech of this chapter is a dialogue between Zarathustra and his home-and his home is solitude . . ." (180).

At this point, I am tempted to share what Osho says about Nietzsche. According to Osho, Nietzsche himself was not ready to accept God's death: "In fact, for his whole life he struggled to accept it. He tried to convince himself by arguing

that god is REALLY dead, but it was difficult for the poor man” (240). Considering that the audience in the book is primarily Zarathustra’s heart, maybe the new Zarathustra is not only trying to convince the old one but the new Nietzsche himself is trying to convince his old Lutheran self, given Nietzsche’s religious background.

Talking about his readers in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche suggests that he does not have his readers in Germany: “...for everywhere else I have readers – none other than choice intelligences, tied and tested in high positions and duties; I even have actual geniuses among my readers. In Vienna, in St. Petersburg, in Stockholm, in Copenhagen, in Paris and New York- everywhere I have been discovered: not in Europe’s flatland Germany”(42).

As the facts suggest, only around sixty copies of Zarathustra were sold in five years (Allison xiii). But thirty years after its initial publication, 150,000 copies of the work were printed by the German government and issued as inspirational reading, along with the Bible, to the young soldiers during WWI (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). This fact did little to improve the book's reception in the Anglo-American world (Magnus and Higgins 39). In the English-speaking world, Nietzsche’s unfortunate association with the Nazis kept him from serious philosophical consideration until the 1950s and 60s. Similarly, Nietzsche became especially influential in French philosophical circles during the 1960s–1980s (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). However, here is Clarence Darrow, writing in 1916: "Since his death, no philosopher on earth has been so talked of as Nietzsche . . . The universities of the world have been turned upside down by Nietzsche . . . Nietzsche has helped men to be strong - to look the world in the face (qtd. in Holingdale “Hero” 72). So when did this book get popular? I still cannot answer.

But whom did Nietzsche write this book for? I can at least make a guess: “When I make a mental image of the perfect reader, it always turns out to be a monster of courage and curiosity... a born adventurer and discoverer” (44). May be that is why in *Ecce Homo*, even after five years of the publication of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he mentions, “My Zarathustra is still looking for such as those having ears that are capable and worthy of the same feeling – alas! He will still have to look for a long time” (45). So it is not just the western intelligentsia of that time that he is addressing to. It is to the readers to come as well. His implied readers are always in the future. His implied reader includes the whole of humanity. He is giving directions to the future generation. He says: “... You could surely create Superman. Perhaps not you yourselves, my brothers! But you could transform yourselves into forefathers and ancestors of the Superman...” (110). He continuously repeats, “I am not the mouth for these ears.” He implies that his arrival is untimely. Even in the last chapter he ends by saying that he has found his animals but he still lacks his rightful men.

Zarathustra is the prophet of the future. So, book as the media of his choice gets justified. Books last through ages, so he is securing his message in a time capsule for the future generation. A written (or other kind of text) lasts possibly for hundreds or thousands of years; whereas an oral-aural communication vanishes once it is spoken and heard ... (Longaker and Walker 15). He repeats the structure “O my brothers” while starting a paragraph. This repetition not just serves him rhetorically but also helps Zarathustra to create a sort of relationship with his audience and Nietzsche with his readers. In doing so, he erases the gap created in a textual world and brings reader into the oral-aural discourse. He is not like earlier saints and prophets who created distance. He has come down to them to give his overflowing knowledge. He sounds formal yet friendly. Another purpose behind a book is that

through a book he can speak individually to each and every audience. He is not barking in front of a crowd, he is addressing his readers personally.

Although this is a book, the readers can hear Zarathustra speaking through his words. They can feel the strength of his voice. Three devices help Nietzsche make the written words come across the readers in the form of the speech. The first one is the use of exclamation mark. It not only expresses excitement, surprise, astonishment or any such strong emotion but also denotes high volume and delivers a sense of command in the sentence. They can almost hear him shout the last part of the sentence: “This will lured me away from God and gods; for what would there be to create if gods existed! The beauty of the Superman came to me as a shadow. Ah, my brothers! What are the gods to me now!” (112).

The other two are colon and semicolon. A colon adds emphasis. It highlights the information added after the colon. Also, the second statement explains or illustrates the first one. Like when he says, “All gods are dead: now we want the Superman to live – let this be our last will one day at the great noontide!” (104). Readers should note that there are two parts in the sentences, before and after the colon. The first mentions God’s death and the second one insists upon Superman. These two concepts go hand in hand. God is dead hence the superman. Man killed god, thus the need for Superman. To take another example: Even God has his hell: it is his love for man. In this sentence the colon functions as a pause amid the speech. The audience waits for the second part of the sentence when Zarathustra pauses after saying even God has his hell. He gives the audience a chance to ask, what is it then? After this pause the answer comes down with a roar: It is his love for man. The semicolons also serve in similar way for Nietzsche: God is dead; god has died of his pity for man. He never lets man forget what he has done.

Another major device Nietzsche employs is rhetorical question: O my brothers! With whom does the greatest danger for the whole human future lie? Is it not with the good and just? (229). Well, there is the answer.

Similarly, there are numerous paradoxical statements. To give an example: The pope says: Some god in you has convinced you to your godlessness (274). Or “Then my heart decided to seek another, the most pious of all those who do not believe in god – to seek Zarathustra!’ (272). How can a person be pious if he does not believe in God?

Among all the rhetorical devices Nietzsche uses in this book, repetition is his hammer. He repeats the structures, the ideas, the words. And most of them all, he repeats the phrase “Thus spoke Zarathustra”. This is not just the title of the book, this is also the phrase he ends every chapter with. Given that there are eighty chapters, it does appear eighty times. But that is not the limit as this phrase also frequently makes its appearance in the middle of the chapters. There is so much insistence upon what he says, on what this modern day Zarathustra says. And what does he repeatedly say? - that God is dead, that God has died out of his pity for man, that he choked on it, that pity is a curse, that afterworldness is sickness, that belief on god is madness and suffering - it causes torment, humiliation, shame. He does not want readers to forget these things. He wants these ideas engraved in their mind, heart and soul.

He implies the same as the madman: must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of the fact that we murdered god? But in Zarathustra’s speech, this tone of regret gets replaced by a kind of penance for the redemption from this deed. Zarathustra repeats again and again the importance of being a companion to the God. His insistence on God’s death, his cry for Superman and the overcoming of man, he repeats them like a bell ringing in the background. His rhythmic short sentences

and paragraphs seem self-sufficient that do not need further explanation. The punctuation not just makes an aesthetic appeal but also makes it easier for reader's eyes to follow the text. There are poems and songs to express the intensity of his emotions which prose cannot carry. They appear in a melodic pattern like a hymn to the new god that is to come. He does not let the audience forget his message. It sinks in like music.

The section at the end with the ass-worshipping leaves readers with a bitter taste in their mouth. When his lion arrives, so does the hope of the Superman but this budding hope instantly gets crushed as the Higher Men get scared and hide from the lion. It shows that humans are not yet ready for their redemption from this life caged in a stone. They need Zarathustra to strike the hammer and bring the Superman out.

Before concluding, I think I should reveal one of the most interesting facts about this book, that is: Zarathustra never declares the death of god. Somewhere it is the devil who informs him. Somewhere it is the pious man who says god choked on his pity. Nietzsche makes the other characters say how god died. And yet, he never mentions exactly how God died. For how long did he choke on his pity? Was it a slow death or an instant one? It is not Zarathustra who knows the truth about god's death. But he is the one who believes in his death. And this is how he kills god - by accepting his demise, thoroughly, with all his heart. Others are still clinging to their faith, to the corpse of their beliefs. The ass festival of the "higher men" proves it. But Zarathustra has buried the dead. He has washed his hands after performing the death rituals. He has buried his god and is now attacking others. He is trying to make his audience bury the stinking corpse they are still hanging on to – even now – after all these years. He wants them to get done with the ghost of their god while they are still hoping for Christ to resurrect. They are reluctant to see the truth in his statement so

they oppose him. They resent him for being the first person to bury his God. His god's grave will not be enough for their gods. They will have to dig their own grave at the backyard to bury their god. And they are reluctant to do so, to pick up their spade. So his pride shames them. His freedom from god mocks at their pitiful condition.

This book is a parchment of revolution against the imagined God and the creation of Superman directed not just at the people of his time but also at the future generation. This is the reason why readers feel his message even today, after so many years. This is why his declaration of God's death trembles them as they are still clinging to their false faith. They are still ass-worshipping. And this ridiculousness of their belief in God stirs up their guilt. It appeals to their pathos. And this is how he kills God, by making them realize what they have been unconsciously doing in the name of God.

Zarathustra kills god by accepting his death and by persuading his readers to do so too. If his statements did not have any effect upon his readers then he would not have created such a hullabaloo. All the rhetorical elements in the text interact with each other to persuade the audience that God is indeed dead. However, it is the dangerous combination of Zarathustra's ethos along with the pathos and logos of his argument that leaves people thunderstruck. By the end of the book, he convinces readers that God died because of his pity for man and they do shoulder this guilt but they are yet unable to join Zarathustra in his celebration for the Superman. They suddenly find the safe canopy of God's shadow jerked away from their head. But unlike Zarathustra's proposition they cannot picture themselves as the companions of God with whose blood their hands are still smeared. Zarathustra's speech that sounds like a transcendental truth still echoes in their head as strongly as he expressed it.

Thus, the terror of his words. Thus, they oppose Nietzsche for making Zarathustra his messenger. His laughter roars like a lion's and yet comes as softly as on a dove's feet.

This thesis solely focuses on the death of God proclamation. However, while doing my study, I came across a number of intriguing aspects of this book which can be further researched upon. To mention one, there is a sense of regret that continues from *The Gay Science* and is still evident in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* despite all the rejoicing. For example when he says: "He [God] saw how man hung on the cross and could not endure it" (272). Note the pun on the word cross. Again, in the statement, "And they knew no other way of loving their god than by nailing men to the Cross!". These sentences deliver a sense like maybe it is not the same god he has declared dead and has been talking about in these phrases. After all he does mention, "When gods die, they always die many kinds of death" (273). So maybe they are two: the created one versus God, the creator. Also, because of the fact that I have very limited knowledge over the Bible, I did not ponder much about its anti-biblical aspect. I think it will make a wonderful research if someone reads *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, side by side with the Bible.

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