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Multitudinous Dimensions of Solitude: Irony and Paradox in Thus Spake Zarathustra

Narendra Khanal

Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kritipur, Nepal.

Email: narendrakhanal3@gmail.com

Abstract

This article reflects Zarathustra's speeches on solitude that give multitudinous meanings with the blend of paradoxical and contradictory ideas. Zarathustra, the main character of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, makes bombastic, paradoxical and ironical claims throughout the text. Sometimes solitude is represented as "embrace of self" and at times as "escape from society." Solitude at times is a psychological space to affirm, recreate and transform the self, but at other times it is also a place to self-destruct and psychological homelessness. His claims are so paradoxical that he defines friends in "Friendship" as both companionship and potential enemy.

Moreover, he regards solitude as a perpetual space of confrontation with an existential void where meaning can be made, affirmed and destroyed. Hence, solitude, for Nietzsche, is a spiritual journey to self-overcoming and overman. Hence, Nietzsche deliberately selects Zarathustra, a saint, as the speaker of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Keywords: Irony; Paradox; Solitude

Solitude and Thus Spake Zarathustra

This article is a two-fold project. It focuses closely on Nietzsche's solitude to reveal the multitudinous and paradoxical meanings of solitude for Zarathustra. I have attempted to analyze some of the speeches and narrations to show the variety of perspectives and rhetorical conventions that Nietzsche uses to show what solitude means for Zarathustra. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is broken down into four books and a prologue, and I have focused on prologue and book one because these sections have the most pertinent and intellectually complex passages where solitude or loneliness has been described. Thus, a full analysis of the language of "solitude" as it exists in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* could not be completely undertaken. Basically, multitudinous dimensions of solitude, paradox and irony associated with solitude have been focused in this article (Nietzsche, 1999).

Arthur E. DuBois in "The Spirit of Solitude" defines solitude as "a state of disengagement" (DuBois, 1936b). Here DuBois means to argue that solitude is the state in which our experience is disengaged from other people. Likewise, Holmes defines solitude as "the lack of desired social contact" (Holmes, 1957). Holmes tries to differentiate solitude with loneliness while defining it. In the same manner, in philosophical literature, solitude is simply defined as "capacity to cope positively with the time spent alone" (Watson, 1993) or it can be defined as space of silence. Philip J. Koch reinforces Watson's idea of solitude and further argues that "philosophy and solitude can be heard to sing in harmony" (Koch, 1990). He means to say that most of the great philosophers of the world like

Wordsworth, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Kant, Descartes, Augustine and Kierkegaard have always opted to embrace solitude in order for great philosophical creation (Koch, 1990). As we know, great religious philosophers of the world Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed also found their great philosophical and moral ideas on the lap of solitude that reinforces Koch's idea of solitude.

However, solitude simply cannot be defined as "time spent alone" as suggested by Watson because loneliness, isolation and alienation also mean "exist alone." Koch further clarifies that "after all loneliness, isolation and alienation are also the ways of existing alone, yet none of these seem quite the same as solitude" (Koch, 1990). Though the solitude means time spend alone but it is unlike loneliness, isolation and alienation.

Because of these reasons Thoreau remarks, "I never found the companion that was as companionable as solitude" (63). For Thoreau solitude is "time spent alone" as said by Watson as well as the best companion. In contrast to Thoreau, D. H. Lawrence claims:

Everything, even individuality itself depends on relationship. The light shines only when circuit is completed. In absolute isolation, I doubt, or if any soul is worth saving, or even having. My individualism is really an illusion. I am part of the great whole and I can never escape. But I can deny my connection, break them, and become a fragment. (Halmos, 1957).

Even in the seemingly contrary ideas from Thoreau and Lawrence we can trace some sort of similarity that both of

them agree that complete isolation is never possible. So, for the better understanding of the idea of solitude, we need to analyze it in relation to other similar ideas like loneliness, isolation and alienation (Goteskys, 1965).

Loneliness is the unpleasant feeling of longing of some kind of interaction with other persons whereas isolation can be best described as a state of consciousness- without-other; but whereas loneliness yearns to bridge the gap between self and others, the sense of isolation is the sense of an unbridgeable gap (Koch, 1990). But alienation can be understood as the combination of loneliness and isolation. Robert Weiss (1974) *Loneliness and Solitude* reinforces that "Alienation combines the negativity of loneliness with the unbridgeableness of isolation, but includes a new element: the sense of relationship to the unreachable other". He further he argues: "alienation is the social or psychological estrangement of an individual from an activity or social form with which he is nevertheless at least nominally associated". Likewise, Goteskys defines "solitude is that state or condition of living alone in any of its many forms, without the pain of loneliness or isolation being an intrinsic component of that state or condition" (Goteskys, 1965). Like Goteskys, Nietzsche's concept of solitude in *Zarathustra* has become a rich and self-creative avenue for greater self-awareness and purposeful growth (Goteskys, 1965).

Though Nietzsche's idea of solitude in *Zarathustra* is read widely he remained in controversy in philosophic, aesthetic and political movements. His idea of solitude can be studied in connection with truth, reality, nihilism, overman and God that remained inconclusive and problematic ever in academia. Yet, his ideas stood vibrant for future intellectual thought that remained cornerstone for different intellectual threads like deconstruction, new historicism and existentialism. Here in the text, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, there is a long period of solitude Zarathustra spends and the description of psychological state of Zarathustra in speeches, internal discourses and introspective narratives. For him, Solitude is the psychological core of his intellectual development from the stage of crisis, conflict to recovery.

Nietzsche wrote extensively, and *Birth of Tragedy*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* remained at the centre of his literary and philosophic career. But, none other books of him is read as intensively as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He wrote extensively, but I have chosen *Thus Spake Zarathustra* for literary analysis because it carries most of his controversial and significant philosophical claims. The book is a mix of genre: there are speeches, introspective reflections, poetry and a developing story. He often makes bombastic and contradictory claims.

So, analyzing Nietzsche's idea is challenging and risky task. Creating simple and coherent meaning out of chaos is not an easy job. Moreover, as *Thus Spake Zarathustra* falls into many generic categories reading Nietzsche hastily would bring injustice onto him. In order to combat these problems I have chosen recurrent literary theme in the text: solitude and loneliness. I will try to associate solitude with his philosophical claim and draw meaning. Moreover, I will also focus our study on irony and paradox associated with solitude. But before jumping into solitude I will try to summarize most recurrent philosophical and controversial claims in *Zarathustra*.

The "five pillars" of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* are his concept about life (life is a process not a state), will to power, nihilism, overman, and eternal recurrence. According to this philosophical concept, everything in the universe is bound to repeat itself endlessly because time is endless, while the amount of matter that exists in time is finite. Everything that exists must have existed before; the future is like the past: on the cosmic scale there can be no progress. Time is not linear, but forever moves in circles. "All that is straight lies," the dwarf agrees. "All truth is crooked. Time itself is a circle."

Because of these reasons Nietzsche through Zarathustra suggests for self-mastery and creation of the meaning of life. According to him, only way of overcoming self is through will to power that is fundamental component of human nature. Everything we do is an expression of the will to power. The will to power is a psychological analysis of all human action and is accentuated by self-overcoming and self-enhancement. Contrasted with living for procreation, pleasure, or happiness, the will to power is the summary of all man's struggle against his surrounding environment as well as his reason for living in it.

Proper utilization of will to power may lead to overman. An overman is a self-mastered individual who has achieved his full power, who can defy all kinds of slave morality. But overman is not an end result for a person, but more the journey towards self-mastery. The overman alludes to Nietzsche's notion of "self-mastery," "self-cultivation," "self-direction," and "self-overcoming." Zarathustra declares:

I teach you the superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?

All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves: and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame...Man is a rope stretched between

the animal and the superman- a rope over an abyss.

A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking- back, a dangerous trembling and halting.

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal. (Zarathustra, 3-5)

Hence, Nietzsche's overman is self-mastered or self-determined individual, who creates his principles and moralities about life defying all existing "slave moralities or imposed-moralities from the outside." Self-determination, in other words, is not just a matter of exercising autonomy in a structured and established world, but almost something like creating a world out of chaos. For him overman is not an end but a way to self-mastery. Nietzsche declares "[man] is a bridge and not a goal" (Zarathustra-5), that is "life is a process, not a state."

According to Nietzsche to conceive of oneself as an entity, as a substance, is a mistake. Living life is not accomplished by holding on, by accumulating things or knowledge, but by always overcoming oneself, and by transforming or passing on everything that one acquires. So Zarathustra tells his followers, "You must want to burn up in your own flames."

But he does not say the ultimate destiny of our life. Is burning up on ones own flames lead to certain meaningful state. He does not answer the question; rather, his message is that ultimately everything is futile and vain. He represents a pervasive weariness and a state of disillusionment that Zarathustra himself cannot escape: a state of nihilism, which is recurrent theme in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Likewise, in the prologue of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he declares death of God. It does not mean that he ever believed in the existence of God; rather, he opines that the Christianity and its principles which were guiding the western society is no more functioning. So, the new morality was essential to fulfil the void. And as a solution he proposes overman. But this thesis avoids these important philosophic ideas as much as possible in order to avoid the endless implications of a philosophic inquiry. More importantly I will focus on solitude and loneliness and language and style used to talk about solitude. As this is a literary analysis, I will focus on how Zarathustra describes and "narrates" his own solitude as well as how Zarathustra "dictates" how and why solitude is critical to his followers.

Solitude is generally regarded as distancing oneself from the society metaphorically or physically. But unlike commonly shared notion of solitude as social isolation, for Zarathustra it is a "desired" one than "condemned" isolation. In the same plain Joseph S. Romano (1996) in

Zarathustra's Solitude: A Paradoxical Embrace of Vitality, Elevated Irony, and Isolation argues:

"Solitude" is typically a word used to describe the common experience of social isolation, but as evidenced by the text, Zarathustra speaks of solitude as if it were a condition that he himself possesses and does not share with other isolated persons. He is not condemned to "solitude" as if solitude were a shared set of experiences that persons isolated from society experience commonly; instead, his solitude and his spirit are "happily" his own. (Romano, 1996).

From this statement it becomes clear that solitude for Zarathustra is not "lack" but inspiration for self-determination and self-awareness.

Solitude in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* has been studied by the wide range of scholars from various perspectives. Peter H. Van Ness in *Nietzsche on Solitude: The Spiritual Discipline of the Godless* tries to show the relationship between spiritual discipline and long period of solitude. He asserts that, "the willingness and the capacity to endure solitude best exemplifies Nietzsche's version of disciplined spiritual practice." (Peter, 1988)

In the same line, Laurence Lampert in *Nietzsche's Teaching: An interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* notes the parallelism between Zarathustra's first mention of "enjoying his solitude and spirit" and Jesus' forty days of temptation in the wilderness. Lampert writes, "Unlike Jesus, who is driven into the wilderness, Zarathustra enters of his own accord; he is attended not by angels but by wild beasts; he neither suffers in his nor is tempted" (Lampert, 1986). But, contrary to aforementioned critics, Joseph Betty in *Zarathustra: A Paradoxical Ways of the Creator* argues that "solitude has provided him (Zarathustra) with the atmosphere in which his truth could emerge, but his truth overflows the vessel of his solitude" (46). Here, Betty focuses on the constructive faculty of solitude that enables to flourish truth in Zarathustra. In the same plain, I will also be talking about different dimensions of solitude in Zarathustra. But, Betty's argument will be a stepping stone for us to explore other unexplored areas of solitude and the language used to talk about solitude.

Situational Meaning of Solitude

Solitude is typically a word used to describe the common experience of social isolation, but as used in the text, Zarathustra speaks of solitude as a condition that he himself possesses and does not share with other isolated persons. He has not taken solitude as a state in which a shared set of experiences that persons isolated from society experience commonly; instead, his free spirit and solitude are happily his own. Zarathustra's speech reveals the

relationship between solitude and the quest for creative ideas.

Nietzsche uses solitude as a philosophical instrument to critique and unmask the premises of tradition, culture and society. Nietzsche projected solitude as a meaningful examination of self. Instead of projecting his ideas outward to culture and society, Nietzsche would have his model to turn inward. Nietzsche claims “men without solitude, without any sense of personal freedom” (125). People can get the meaning and ideas from a through-going examination of self which can be achieved by cultivating solitude. Solitude is not merely a place to embrace and love one’s self; it is also a hostile place where old values, habits and wills will be painfully abolished.

Zarathustra opposes the socially and culturally constructed truth claims and provokes the radical distressed upon them. He does not obey the social construct and truth claims. As he claims, “Chastity is a virtue with some but with many almost a vice” (48). Zarathustra gets enlightened through the long period of solitude. For him nothing is “given,” neither a moral order nor a pre-established meaning of life or of the universe. Self-determination is not just the matter of exercising autonomy in a structured and established world, but almost something like creating a world out of chaos.

Nietzsche himself undergoes his psychological isolation. After the long period of solitude, Nietzsche gets a more penetrating knowledge of himself. Solitude safeguards the inspirational source and person’s inevitable will to power. As Rorty noted, “moreover solitude naturally comprehends self-concealments, of his spiritual masks” (45). Here, the central character, Zarathustra is considered as an archetype for the modern spiritually sensitive individual, one who struggles with nihilism, the contemporary crisis in values after the collapse of the Christian worldview. In this fictional philosophical text, the narrator indulges in the long period of solitude and gives the lectures on various philosophical themes.

For Zarathustra living life is not accomplished by holding on, by accumulating things or knowledge, but by always overcoming oneself. Zarathustra argues that solitude is most importantly conflicting state of ideas and wills, so that the conflict can give the way to creativity. For Zarathustra only in solitude the self can lose its relation to the implicit and explicit truth value of social construct and the self gives the way to new perspective, idea and creativity. In response to his solitude claims, Zarathustra speaks:

O my home, solitude! How happily and tenderly your voice speaks to me! We do not question each other; we do not complain to each other, we often walk together through open doors..... Here the words and word

shrines of all being open up before me: here all being wishes to become world, all becoming wishes to learn from me how to speak. (44-45)

In this passage Zarathustra’s appreciations of his solitude is clear. It provides him with the space and companionship needed to embrace his own world.

As Zarathustra descends from mountain top isolation, for the first time, he encounters a saint who also lives in solitude. The saint tells Zarathustra that he no longer loves man because man is “too imperfect a thing” (123). Because of mankind’s imperfections he now loves only God and he spends his time in solitude “singing, crying, laughing and humming,” (124) praises to God. The saint makes important observations about Zarathustra. He witnessed Zarathustra’s original assent and remarks about the changes he sees and also questions Zarathustra’s decision to rejoin mankind. The saint remarks as following:

Altered is Zarathustra; a child hath Zarathustra, become; an awakened one is Zarathustra: what wilt thou do in the land of the sleepers? As in the sea hast thou lived in solitude, and it hath borne thee up. Alas, wilt thou now go ashore? Alas wilt thou again drag thy body thyself? (12)

The saint has questioned Zarathustra’s descent because he thinks that the solitude is the idyllic place of isolation. He describes Zarathustra’s solitude as like living in the sea and this ‘sea’ has awakened him and given him a child like disposition. In describing Zarathustra’s appearance as such, he reveals new effects of Zarathustra’s isolation. The saint’s observation shows that in solitude, Zarathustra learns how to be both aware of new earthly wisdom to become free, creative and innocent. Laurence Lampert further extends the importance of saint’s observation with Zarathustra, calling it an “encounter between the solitary lover of mankind and the solitary lover of God” (17). According to Lampert, the saint turns to solitude because he cannot bear the burden of man’s imperfections. Because of this he chooses to live in the forest “singing, crying, laughing and humming” praises to God (Lampert, 1986).

According to Lampert Zarathustra on the other hand enters solitude to contemplate the meaning of existence after the “death of God”. His solitude brings him renewed hope and happiness that exceeds the capacity of his solitary existence. After meeting with the priest, Zarathustra’s solitude provokes a contradiction between “love of self” and “love of mankind”. Solitude, for Zarathustra, is the psychological core of his perpetual intellectual development but for the Saint it’s a mere place of social isolation and it’s a time for singing, crying, laughing, and praising to god. For Zarathustra, isolation is not something endured; rather, it is a happiness enjoyed.

Zarathustra defines the self-creative process which is necessarily lonely and self-destructive in the sense that the self must destruct in order to be recreated new. Zarathustra warns his followers to seek solitude which invites loneliness and confusion. He asserts in the following way:

He who sees, easily gets lost. All loneliness is guilt' thus speaks herd. The voice of the herd will still be audible in you. And when you will say, 'I no longer have a common conscience with you,' it will be a lament and an agony. Behold, this agony itself was born of common conscience, and the last glimmer of that conscience still glows on your affliction. (53)

This extract extends the ideas from the speech "On the love of the Neighbour". Here, the word "herd" which is characterized by superficial companionship on the root of "common conscience" poses the risk to the self in the solitude as Zarathustra elaborates. The "herd" is important concept across Nietzsche's thought which represents slave like obedience to the superficial moralities. He claims the herd as the root of the common conscience and when this common conscience is lost agony follows behind it. Without the access to a common conscience, the individual in solitude will feel a loss of social gravity that may be disorienting.

Here Zarathustra intends to show his followers the road to productive solitude to "the way to yourself" through suffering and self-destruction. In this very sense, the solitude itself can become the state of being alone and loneliness as well as the source of persons inevitable will to power or self destructive as well as re-creative place.

Solitude: A Pathway to Self-Overcome and Overman

Nietzsche transformed solitude into a philosophical instrument to critique and reveal the premises of tradition and culture. He projected solitude as a model of thought and being for what he conceived to be a new category of thinker. This new thinker of the future he calls the free spirit. Eventually, the free spirit becomes the Higher Man or Overman- the better translation of "Übermensch," with its image of savage power. The temporary retreats into solitude are the main part of the deconstructive aspect of self-shaping in which one can dissolve the entrapment in a slavish identity. Thus Nietzsche not only advocated solitude as a psychological utility but perceived solitude as the logical position of anyone who had unmasked society. In describing the free spirit, Nietzsche sometimes appears to simply be safeguarding personal autonomy or independence.

Nietzsche injects myriad ideas into the book, but there are a few recurring themes. The overman, a self-mastered individual is an almost omnipotent idea in Thus Spoke

Zarathustra. Man as a race is merely a bridge between animals and the overman. He also makes a point that the overman is not an end result of the person, but more the journey toward self-mastery. For Nietzsche the overman is the meaning of the earth. This book in several passages expresses loathing for sentiments of human pity, compassion and mercy, which is regarded as the greatest sin that terminates the spirit of human revolution and fundamental component of human nature, will to power.

The prologue begins with Zarathustra's journey towards the mountain retreat to delve in solitude and to share his accumulated wisdom with the rest of the humanity. It begins as "at the age of thirty Zarathustra left his home and lake of his home and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude and for ten years did not tire of it" (1). His aim is to enjoy in the long solitude and to proclaim the 'over man,' a type of human being that is to be as superior to today's human beings as today's humanity is to the higher apes. For Zarathustra, the state of modern humanity is disillusioned, tired and mired in a cultural wasteland and to overcome it he calls a new guiding ideal to give new energy and meaning to the people.

The cause of present spiritual malice what Zarathustra refers is as the death of God. It does not mean that Zarathustra thought God had ever existed, but he knew that once the concept of God was a most important inspiration and impact in the most of Western and Non-Western culture. When the secularized tendency of Modern Age developed, the idea of omnipotent God lost its significance and organizing force and by the time scientific rationality had become the prominent mode of thought. Moral order is increasingly lost its valid basis about the meaning of life and ultimately nihilism has become a hunting problem of modern humanity, and it is the problem that Zarathustra's philosophy is meant to solve. When he undergoes a long period of solitude, he comes with the concept of the overman as an answer to the modern wasteland. He wants to overcome its present bankrupt civilization in order to create the overman:

I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man? All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves: and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame. (3)

In his long period of solitude, Zarathustra contemplates through the different stages from rejection, crisis, and

conflict to recovery. The key to a stable solitude is what psychology simply calls self-esteem. One of the reasons Nietzsche revenges vigorously against authority and popular morality is society's constant attempt to destroy individual self-esteem and capture it for its own uses. The result is alienation and fragmentation of self, with all attendant psychological problems. Solitaries can recognize this and strengthen themselves against it.

Zarathustra has defined solitude as a psychological space in which his followers and he might reflect on their own perspectives, intuitions and wills but here for the first time, he conceptualizes solitude as an escape. In the first speech entitled "On the Flies of the Market Place," Zarathustra uses the words like "miserable," "small" and "poisonous" to describe the unworthiness of market place and the reflection of necessity of resentment from there. So Zarathustra advises his followers to flee. Lampert argues that, "only the solitude, withdrawal from contemporary debates in the market place of ideas, makes it possible to gain perspective that allows ideas to come to light as what they are" (56-57). Zarathustra is advising his followers to envision solitude as a life affirming condition that offers a sober perspective with which to contemplate the complexity of existence.

In "The Flies in the Market place" Zarathustra warns his followers about the dangers of market place. We assume that by market place Zarathustra means a congregation of pity intellectuals, politicians, and religious men. Zarathustra asserts that the market place is full of "actors", "showmen" and "Jesters" who seek god that make a "big noise" (163). In the social debates of market place ideas and wisdom are threatened by big noises and they push for a naive "yes" or "no" in critical debates.

Zarathustra, for three times, advises his followers to "flee" into their solitude when face with perils. Up until this point in the text, Zarathustra has spoken of solitude as an embrace of self.

Zarathustra goes to the danger of solitude too, he wants his followers about becoming solely "lustful and ambitious" (196) in the absence of social norms. He says that self criticism is not a quick dismissal of authority. Instead, embracing solitude and critical awareness is a slow process and the growing away from the common ideology. The road to solitude and one's self is not a simple as the "puffing up" of importance and throwing away from the common conscience. Further, along in his speech, Zarathustra makes a key comment on the effects of solitude and the hardship that accompany his self-imposed isolation. He poses questions to his followers in the following way:

Can you give yourself your own evil and your own good and hang your own will over yourself as a law? Can you be your own

judge and avenger of your own law? Terrible it is to be alone with the judge and avenger of one's own law. Thus is a star thrown out into the void and into the icy break of solitude? (175)

From this above quoted paragraph it becomes clear that in solitude one must become the judge and avenger of one's own self-created laws. When one embraces the void of solitude, one implicitly accepts the task of active self-creation which involves the continual destruction of old values and selves so that new creative codes and values can be made and re-made. He describes the solitude as the dramatized process of self-overcoming and creating the meaning of an individual.

Zarathustra undergoes a long period of retreat or solitude escape from the meaningless world of chaos to create an individual one. So the self-determination is crucial at all levels of Zarathustra's philosophy because he was the lover of mankind, not of gods. He has no desire to make hymns and song them and praise the god as saint. He has presented the modern world as pitiful, tired and disillusioned. He has presented the condition of the modern man in the following lines; "Ye have made your way from the worm to man and much within you is still worm. Once were ye apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes" (3). After descending from the mountain and a long period of solitude, he went at the market place and tried to instruct the mobs about the concepts of superman. He calls the superman as the meaning of earth and he can remain the true to the earth.

In "On the Friend," Zarathustra uses of "solitude" and "pure air" to define characteristics of companionship makes the fundamental embrace of self. To Zarathustra, solitude is only route to an embrace of self which would allow social chains to be loosened enough for individuality. Solitude can give the capacity to act with compassion and to act with combativeness in friendship. He reasserts the importance of solitude for individuality and self-love and also asserts the danger of a common and superficial brotherhood. For him, friendship should be both combative and supportive, so that friendship is geared towards making friend strong thinkers. Solitude is also not merely isolation for isolation sake: but it brings self-knowledge and self-awareness to one's self which in turn redeems the virtue of friendship.

Zarathustra defines friend as both companionship and potential enemy. For him, friends must be willing to go to wars with and against each other, each for the self and the other's sake. A friend should also be compassionate, but conceal his compassion "under a hard shell". Towards the end of the speech Zarathustra remarks as, "Are you pure air and solitude and bread and medicine for your friend? Some cannot loosen their own fetters but is nevertheless

his friend's emancipator" (49). The importance and hardness for friendship shines through these lines. The words medicine and bread relay the importance of companionship, while pure air and solitude and loosened chains convey the importance of hardship. Zarathustra's use of "solitude" and "pure air" to define the importance of companionship makes the fundamental embrace of self and profound and pervasive free spirit of personal autonomy. In this way to Zarathustra, solitude is the only route to an embrace of self and overman, a self-mastered individual.

Irony and Paradox in Solitude

The name of the character, Zarathustra is taken from the ancient Persian prophet usually known as Zoroaster, the Persian founder of Zoroastrianism. Nietzsche has been clearly portraying Zarathustra as new and different Zarathustra, one who turns against traditional morality. He goes to characterize Zarathustra as first immoralist. His choice of the religious and prophetic character to preach the concept of death of god, self-overcome and overman sounds paradoxical and contradictory. He has used a unique experimental style. This book embodies a number of innovative poetical and rhetorical methods of expression whose style often light-heartedly imitates that of the New Testament and of the Platonic dialogues. All this, along with book's ambiguity and paradoxical nature, it has gained its eventual enthusiastic reputation.

The earthly wisdom that Zarathustra has gained in the happiness of his solitude is paradoxical, but this paradox has become a quest to bring his wisdom down from the mountains. Zarathustra's most basic contention is the sweeping rejection of all metaphysics. For Zarathustra there is only one world and that world is essentially physical. He rejects the dualism in its philosophical as well as in its religious forms. He admonishes his followers time and again to "be faithful to the earth!"(37). He calls saints of metaphysical religions as "preachers of death" (36) because of their teaching. They imply that there is better than the earth and its life forms. But paradoxically his all preaching and sermons to the villagers sound religious hymns referring to the human soul and sun. His style of preaching is Christ like after the period of resurrection. For him, Saints kill true reverence for life and they do so because they are afraid of life because they are failed to come to terms with it.

The terms solitude and spirit in the text show the psychologically and socially isolated condition of Zarathustra. More importantly these words show that, in solitude Zarathustra accepts and embraces a multiplicity of self. The state of isolation has presented as the idyllic isolation. When Zarathustra descended from the mountain after changing his heart he questions the sun in the soliloquy that first reveals this change:

Thou great star! What would be thy happiness if thou hadst not those for whom thou shinest!

For ten years hast thou climbed hither unto my cave; thou wouldst have worried of thy light and of the journey, had it not been for me, mine eagle and my serpent.

But we waited thee every morning, took from thee thine overflow and blessed thee for it.

Lo! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it. (Beatty, 1970).

In these above mentioned lines it appears that Zarathustra's descent is based on paradoxical reasons. Beatty identifies two reasons why Zarathustra seeks to leave the happiness for his solitude. First, Zarathustra appears to want followers receive the wisdom he has gathered. He goes as far as to question the value of his freedom or "honey" if he has "hands outstretched" to receive it. The second reason is the "weariness" over his wisdom because it has become too much for his capacity to carry and he needs followers to receive it. These two reasons seem to point to the lack that he experiences after ten years happy and isolated contemplation. Zarathustra gathers his wisdom from the sun and his mountain top isolation.

In 'On the Friend' Zarathustra opines the characteristics of strong friendship. He uses "war" metaphors to describe the importance of hardship and intuitiveness as it needs to friendship. These metaphors help to describe a specific context for the specific kind of friendship that Zarathustra seeks for his followers. By using these metaphors, he gives paradoxical meaning in the concept of friendship. Zarathustra claims that "one should still honour the enemy" in a friend, and he poses the question "Can you go close to your friend without going over to him" (48)? This speech is presented to define friends as both companions and potential enemies. Zarathustra paradoxically creates an image of closeness juxtaposed against the path of distance, when he states that friends must be willing to come close without going over to each other. Friends must be willing to go to war with and against each other, each for the self and the other sake. A friend should also be compassionate, but conceal this compassion "under a hard shell." (49)

Zarathustra uses the earthly metaphors to describe the paradoxical embrace of love of self in solitude and lack of extended periods of solitude. His solitude is the condition by which he creates his earthly wisdom. He is caught between the fundamental embrace of self and the fundamental need to overflow into "outstretched hands". As his journey continues, this paradoxical relationship of an embrace of isolation in the solitude has become more powerful and telling of Zarathustra's becoming.

Zarathustra's solitude is a psychological space where he experiments with the multiplicity of self and the intellectual effect of this isolation.

When Zarathustra descends from the mountaintop after the long period of isolation, he encounters a saint who lives in solitude. The saint tells Zarathustra that he has no desire to live with human being because man is "too imperfect a thing". Because of mankind's imperfections, he loves only God. The Saint questions Zarathustra's descent because he views solitude as a pleasant isolation. The saint's observations show that in solitude, Zarathustra learns how to be both aware of new earthly wisdom and thus "awakened", but to become free creative and innocent, thus the word "child". This is meant that Zarathustra has become "paradoxically enlightened" and thus capable of fresh creativity and self-aware critical analysis.

Laurence Lampert further extends the importance of the saint's conversation with Zarathustra, calling it an "encounter between the solitary lover of mankind and the solitary lover of God." (17)

Lampert draws the attention toward the paradoxical nature of this solitude which is not a common experience unified its definition of social isolation.

Zarathustra's solitude has given him new paradox, earthly wisdoms in his quest to make meaning in the absence of objective authority; whereas saint's solitude has given him a means by which he can converse with the God without the limiting effects of the imperfections of society. It is clear that Zarathustra's solitude is complicated by a "love of self" and a "fundamental need to overflow". The wisdom that he has gained in the happiness of his solitude is paradoxical, but that paradox has supported his quest to bring his wisdom down to the mountains.

Solitude is a perpetual confrontation with an existential void where meaning can be made, remade and destroyed. Zarathustra gives solitude a breath, whose iciness has the potential to forward the motion of creative self overcoming. Solitude is no mere a blank page. It is a confrontation of the multiplicity of the instincts and socially determined values that make up the self, and this confrontation invites confusion, paradox and inconsistency. Zarathustra has illustrated the angst and conflict on by solitude when he narrates his process of self-overcoming. This creation of meaning in solitude is always in flux and paradoxical. Only in solitude can the self-lose its anchor to the implicit and explicit truth-value of social constructs. And after that meaning and values can be destroyed to create individuals new perspectives, ideas and creativity.

Zarathustra admits that in this state of fundamental aloneness there will be times when all appears false and "solitude will make you weary." (175)

Zarathustra has not properly defined about what type of "new values" can be gained by solitude; instead he only defines the condition by which his followers might take the path of self-overcoming. In the closing speech of "On the Way to the Creator", Zarathustra tells to his followers about the greatest danger that they must face if they go to the road of the creator in the following way:

But the worst enemy you can encounter will always be you, yourself; you lie in wait for yourself in caves and woods [...] Go into your loneliness with your love and with your creation, my brother; and only much later will justice limp after you. With tears go in to your loneliness, my brother. I love him who wants to create over and beyond himself and thus perishes. (55-56)

The extract further explores the harsh and paradoxical condition of solitude where his followers will become their own greatest danger. In this passage Zarathustra opines that solitude is most importantly an internal wrestling with conflicting and contradictory ideas and wills, so that conflict and contradiction can give way to creativity and self-overcome.

Conclusion

Summing up, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is a jumble of myriad of ideas and I have tried to create a thread for better understanding of the text. Solitude is the key idea from which I can connect all diverse meaning in the text. Solitude for Zarathustra is the psychological core of his continual intellectual development. In the text Zarathustra undergoes ten years long period of solitude and finally he decides to return among the people and shares his overbrimming wisdom. Nietzsche's text reveals the complexity and importance of isolation and solitude to be a thinker. This article has explored the paradoxical meaning of solitude and its contextual meanings to unpack the ideas.

Solitude helps to convey Zarathustra's intellectual becoming in a unique way. By intellectual becoming, we mean the continual change, growth, renewal, and self-overcoming that Zarathustra experiences as the text develops. Here, Zarathustra requires the isolation and social distance in which solitude fuels his evolving wisdom and the development of the character. I have sought to reveal the solitary journey of Zarathustra to show his ever-ending and ever-changing process of introspection and self-creation. Zarathustra's journey of solitude is complicated by the "love of self" and a "fundamental need to overflow."

The prologue tells the story of Zarathustra's descent and his first encounter with people. He gives his speeches to his followers or "friends," that are not directed to the general audiences. In his speeches, Zarathustra clarifies solitude. In "On the Friend," Zarathustra argues that solitude will give his followers the capacity to act with compassion and combativeness. For Zarathustra, solitude is the most important internal conflicting state of ideas and wills where conflict provides a way to creativity.

Moreover, solitude at times is a psychological space to affirm, recreate, and transform the self, but at other a place to self-destruct and sociological homelessness. Solitude is also a place where one can reject all social moralities and ethics. It is a foundation for radical individualism, beginning of honest companionship and an aesthetic culture. In this way Zarathustra has made a lot of contradictory and paradoxical claims associated with the meaning of solitude. Despite all these contradictory and bombastic claims, his basis of argument is to present solitude as a means of self-overcome and intellectual "becoming."

Nietzsche has taken solitude as a space of the absence of objective authority. He defines solitude as a condition in which an individual can recognize himself and strengthen from the result of alienation and fragmentation of self. It is a psychological space in which an individual might reflect his perspectives, intuitions and wills. In "On the Flies of Market Place," Zarathustra is advising his followers to take solitude as a life affirming condition that offers a sober perspective with which to contemplate the complexity of existence. Likewise in "On Friends," Zarathustra defines friends both as companionship and potential enemy.

Nietzsche has conceptualized solitude as a place to flee away from the social environment that allows social chains to be loosened enough for individuality and honest companionship. The road to solitude is not simple rather it throws away from the common conscience. Solitude, for

Nietzsche, is the perpetual space of confrontation with an existential void where meaning can be made, affirmed and destroyed. He defines solitude as the condition by which the followers might take the road of self-overcoming. In the long spiritual journey of mountain retreat Nietzsche's perspective, audience and purpose is always changing. More importantly, he always confronts and wrestles with purpose as he wanders at the mountain tops and in the market place. In the same token, Zarathustra's speeches on and of solitude also gives multitudinous meanings with the blend of paradoxical ideas.

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