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To Give Birth to a Dancing Star: Nietzsche's Linguistic Deliverance

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To Give Birth to a Dancing Star
Nietzsche's Linguistic Deliverance

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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For My Grandmother, Marlys Bubak

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Ich sage euch: man muss noch Chaos in sich haben, um einen tanzenden Stern gebären zu können. Ich sage euch: ihr habt noch Chaos in euch.

I say unto you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say unto you: you still have chaos in yourselves.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential and universal aspect of life. It is what allows me to convey these words on the page to *you*. Whether in the form of the written word or the movement of the body, language plays a paramount role in our everyday lives. That being said, it does not take a deep consideration of language to begin to notice its arbitrary nature. Both children and adults alike will ask at some point in their life: why do we call *X* this? *Why is a table a table? Well, it comes from the old French word, which comes from the Latin: 'tabula.'* Why? Well, simply because we say so—and so on. Upon examining linguistic designations there is, naturally, an etymological explanation for the development of language, however, ultimately linguistic convention lacks any connection to the thing in itself. It is important, then, to ask: What are the ethical consequences of language? What happens when words move beyond a moral function?

As humans we are naturally bound to language; however, we are *not* bound to the conventional word, which often plays a moral role. If you divorce language from words, what is left? What you have is expression and communication in an unbound form. Beyond conventional words, expression prevails with fluidity and movement. When we examine poetry, for instance, it is no coincidence that we often examine the words through metaphors of movement. *This sentence flows well. Eyes glide across pages. This poem moved me.* We invoke images of dancing, of artistic and fluid movement, when poetic expression is affective. We uplift language as generative and liberated expression especially when it moves beyond a moral function in this way.

The metaphor of dance captures the essence of this project's linguistic aim particularly well. Dance persists as a form of expression and communication, of language, beyond the written word. Poetry often attempts to dance in its break from convention; however, *dance* truly liberates the tongue. To operate through the metaphor of dance is my attempt to convey the struggle we have to express and communicate ourselves. There is an immense freedom and liberation in the movement of dancing that stands as a form of expression and communication, like language, but without the trappings of words.

My senior project engages with the work of late 19th century German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche, a figure who tried so desperately to dance with his words. Namely, I will explore a variety of texts¹ from Nietzsche which display his critical understanding and employment of language morally and artistically. In doing so, I will explore the questions: What is language and what are its limitations? What is it able to do? When words escape us and become an inadequate tool for communication and expression, we are forced to reexamine ourselves, and language consequently. Nietzsche stands as a key figure who shares this concern for the reexamination of language. Ultimately I will argue that Nietzsche's philosophy of language provides no explicit antidote for our linguistic condition; rather, Nietzsche provides vital insight and a possible guide for linguistic liberation.

My first chapter will establish Nietzsche's understanding of language through an examination of truth and morality. To do so, I will turn to one of Nietzsche's richest and most fundamental works: his short essay *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* from 1873. Here, the conceptualization of truth is examined linguistically and sets the foundation for

¹ My readings of Nietzsche's work will provide both the original German and an English translation, provided by various Nietzsche scholars.

Nietzsche's philosophy of language. Within Nietzsche scholarship, often this essay is left in the shadows and dominated by *Die Geburt der Tragödie* or *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. There is a stark contrast in the form of each of Nietzsche's works which shows a deeper struggle to convey his philosophy in words. I turn to *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* as a text which successfully creates a foundation for an ethical understanding of language. By raising questions of how to speak inevitably one must face the question of how we live. Through a moral approach to the concept of truth, Nietzsche, and I, will argue for the liberation of morality through language.

My second chapter will utilize Nietzsche's philosophy of language established in the preceding chapter to closely examine his middle period of writing, namely through the book *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Here, I will show Nietzsche's attempts to dance with language by conveying his philosophy through an act of poetic translation. *Zarathustra* reveals a deep agony within Nietzsche, which originates from the lack of reception his work had at the time. This text serves as a good stopping point for the reader to think back to the stakes of Nietzsche's linguistic project. *Zarathustra* is now one of his best received texts and in reexamining materials for this project I am still amazed by the engagement with this book. Clearly, there is something to poetry that let his philosophy shine through. And yet I cling to his resentful essay from his Wagnerian days. Nietzsche's being misunderstood in both more traditionally philosophical form and poetic narrative metaphors, meant ultimately relaying a life's work of philosophy to an audience of no one.

In my third chapter, I will jump ahead nearly two decades after Nietzsche's passing and turn to the place where Nietzsche's linguistic task is taken on: Dadaism. This drastic shift to the

realm of art shows a commitment to creation and form that I feel Nietzsche was never able to truly fulfill beyond the written word (despite how lovely his words can be). I will provide both a broad summary of the Dada movement and closely examine a few works specifically in regards to their Nietzschean resonance. The Dada movement displays the step beyond language and morality that Nietzsche so desperately urged for.

If language is a means of survival, words are dangerous artillery. The task of this project is to demonstrate the power of language in both its moral and artistic utility, with an emphasis on the benefits of the latter. Naturally, I am largely bound to the written word to fulfill this task. As the writer, I can only hope the words do their job as your eyes dance across the page.

CHAPTER ONE: Nietzsche as Philosopher of Language

Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche's early work entitled *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*² examines the conceptualization of truth. This rather short essay reveals the arbitrary nature of truth by investigating its ethical and linguistic origins. To do so, Nietzsche establishes a philosophy of language to illustrate his understanding. A multitude of questions arise from this liberating investigation of truth. What is at stake in moving truth outside the realm of morality?

If we accept Nietzsche's position that truth lies on an arbitrary foundation, must we then abandon the fundamental human drive to try and make some sense of the world around us? Certainly not. Nietzsche acknowledges that linguistic conceptualization is simultaneously tragically and beautifully inevitable for mankind. In relocating truth from the sphere of ethics to the realm of language, Nietzsche leaves the reader largely lost in a sea of metaphors. I will argue that in Nietzsche's *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*, Nietzsche not only liberates truth from the constraints of morality, but that this also sets the groundwork for the liberation of morality from truth. In this sense, I will show how Nietzsche urges the reader to free themselves from traditional moral structures and to think about morality linguistically, metaphorically, and on their own terms.

I. The Liberation of Truth from Morality

² Significantly, this work has been translated to "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral/Extramoral Sense." 'Außer' generally translates to 'exceptionally' in regards to an exclusionary negation *or*, in contrast, in an extraordinary sense. I have chosen to work with the German title to maintain the ambiguity of Nietzsche's words and especially the term 'außer,' in this case.

Truth as Verstellung

I will start by examining the various factors which Nietzsche sees as essential to the establishment of truth. To begin, Nietzsche investigates the development of truth and traces its origins, unexpectedly, to the arrogant self-soothing deceptive process of *Verstellung*. *Verstellung* can be translated as dissimulation, pretending, or disguising. *Verstellung* is similar to the German word *Vorstellung*, which can be translated as imagination or representation. (For the reader keen on the German word, they might even mistakenly read *Verstellung* as *Vorstellung*). *Verstellung* differs in that there is an element of repression, denial, rejection, in the pretending that is not imaginary or representative in a neutral sense.³

Both *Verstellung* and *Vorstellung* can be seen as imaginative or perceptive acts, however *Verstellung* operates with an element of negation absent in *Vorstellung*. The simulation in *Verstellung* is that of dissimulation, whereas *Vorstellung* stands as a more performative simulation. This distinction further shows Nietzsche's intentions in employing the more negative word. He is very careful of his own language and uses it powerfully to display his frustrated understanding of truth. Instead of constantly challenging and acknowledging the sobering chaotic reality of existence, we largely choose a life of *Verstellung*. *Verstellung* is a facade and denial of the original self in this context.

Nietzsche's essay on truth begins with a reflection on *Verstellung*. What is of crucial importance to Nietzsche is that in the beginning there was nothing but *Verstellung*, thus pressing the question of the origin and drive to truth to the forefront. He shifts to the role of the individual in society in understanding to further press the question of truth. He writes:

³ As a verb, *sich verstellen* is reflexive and is an action against oneself. *Etwas verstellen* is less of a denial and rejection so much as to block or deflect something.

Der Intellekt, als ein Mittel zur Erhaltung des Individuums, entfaltet seine Hauptkräfte in der Verstellung; denn diese ist das Mittel, durch das die schwächeren, weniger robusten Individuen sich erhalten, als welchen einen Kampf um die Existenz mit Hörnern oder scharfen Raubtier-Gebiß zu führen versagt ist.⁴ (Nietzsche 1)

Verstellung functions here as a primary and natural means for individual preservation.

Instead of living in the utter chaos that is a meaningless and formless world, the individual creates illusions of understanding, establishing a sense of knowledge and of concepts which solidify over time to help the overall preservation of the individual. The element of repression found in *Verstellung* suggests that truth is a denial of a more primal or natural fluid interaction with the world. He even later notes that this process leads to the development of concepts that are not at all representative of an individual original or unique experience.⁵ Nietzsche views those reliant on the process of *Verstellung* as weaker individuals, as it is simpler and more comfortable to remain immersed in a world which ‘makes sense.’

Verstellung is a process which serves as a response to a world which offers no guide. To figure out how to function in the world we dissolve into illusions of human understanding which make it seem as though things are figured out—set in stone over time. *Verstellung* is a weapon against the creativity and complexity of existence. This is especially true once *Verstellung* expands beyond just the individual and becomes an essential element of society. We comprehend forms and ideas, then regard them as truth, and in doing so we happily deceive ourselves and

⁴ In English: “As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principal powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves—since they have been denied the chance to wage battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey” (Large 115).

⁵ “Denken wir besonders noch an die Bildung der Begriffe. Jedes Wort wird sofort dadurch Begriff, daß es eben nicht für das einmalige ganz und gar individualisierte Urerlebnis, dem es sein Entstehen verdankt...” (Nietzsche 3). In English: “In particular let us further consider the formation of concepts. Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin” (Large 117).

continue to live in ignorance because its easier and seemingly more beneficial than accepting chaos.

Truth as Social Concept

I will now examine Nietzsche's understanding of truth as a social concept, in order to further demonstrate the steps Nietzsche takes in the text to deconstruct and thereby liberate truth from the rigid constraints of morality. Nietzsche describes the development of truth in terms of its benefits for the preservation of the individual in society.

Soweit das Individuum sich, gegenüber andern Individuen, erhalten will, benutzt es in einem natürlichen Zustand der Dinge den Intellekt zumeist nur zur Verstellung; weil aber der Mensch zugleich aus Not und Langweile gesellschaftlich und herdenweise existieren will...Jetzt wird nämlich das fixiert, was von nun an "Wahrheit" sein soll, das heißt, es wird eine gleichmäßig gültige und verbindliche Bezeichnung der Dinge, und die Gesetzgebung der Sprache gibt auch die ersten Gesetze der Wahrheit.⁶ (Nietzsche 2)

The individual employs truth to live sustainably among others. Out of boredom and necessity we agree to mutually dissimulate (*Verstellung*) so that we may peacefully and coherently coexist. In other words, we all adhere to the same uniform designations for things and live according to such. We must remain in agreement about what it means to be truthful in order to live among each other without chaos. Peaceful and beneficial social coexistence is only successful when we agree on certain 'truthful' designations for concepts.

For Nietzsche, the social benefits of truth set a moral precedent which solidifies the first 'laws of truth.' So, we establish laws of truth which are to be regarded as holding a moral value in the world. Nietzsche offers the example of a man who claims he is rich when the proper social

⁶ In English: "Insofar as the individual wants to maintain himself against other individuals, he will under natural circumstances employ the intellect mainly for dissimulation. But at the same time, from boredom and necessity, man wishes to exist socially and with the herd...That is to say, a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth" (Large 115).

designation for the man would be poor. In this case, the man would be excluded by society due to a lack of trust and good moral standing. He was henceforth designated the liar. In calling out the liar, Nietzsche emphasizes that mankind is indifferent to acquiring a sort of pure knowledge with no consequence or utility for society and instead prioritizes the “pleasant, life-preserving consequences” of a moral truth which allows us to communicate efficiently with one another.

In the drive toward truth, the individual loses the dangerous exploration of existence by a sort of escapism reliant on fixed forms and illusions of understanding. The individual then operates on the basis that such forms and illusions are solidified as truth. We ignorantly and arrogantly mistake our knowledge for a fixed notion of truth. We merely see forms and illusions of conventions which are entirely arbitrary. Every single thing we, as individuals in a society, can comprehend is done and understood in terms of human ability. The individual must function in this deceptive reality because it is how ‘the intellect’ or consciousness is able to operate. We are limited in our means for understanding. We play with a false perception of reality because it's all we have. Those who are too weak to ‘wage battle with existence’ and accept its arbitrary chaos will instead lie to themselves and play with *Verstellung*, a masked world of deceptive lies.

Truth as a Function of Language

So far, I have investigated truth primarily as both a process of *Verstellung* and as a social concept. It is now fair to say that truth, as Nietzsche has demonstrated, exists with no *a priori* value; that is to say, it has no foundation based in anything other than that of rigid manmade designations for fluid ever-changing experiences. Once he has established this foundational understanding of truth, Nietzsche can shift to the role of linguistic conventions. To further

demonstrate the arbitrary nature of truth, I will now investigate the essential tool by which we are able to communicate truth: language.

Nietzsche moves to the importance of language by asking:

Und überdies: wie steht es mit jenen Konventionen der Sprache? Sind sie vielleicht Erzeugnisse der Erkenntnis, des Wahrheitssinnes, decken sich die Bezeichnungen und die Dinge? Ist die Sprache der adäquate Ausdruck aller Realitäten?⁷ (Nietzsche 2)

The answer to this question for Nietzsche is *no!* Nietzsche notes that no such truth naturally exists within the forms we create, rather that *we* apply the value of truth to the various forms of truth. He speaks to the process of truth's creation through emphasizing the role of language by saying:

Was ist ein Wort? Die Abbildung eines Nervenreizes in Lauten....welche willkürlichen Abgrenzungen, welche einseitigen Bevorzugungen bald der bald jener Eigenschaft eines Dinges!...Das "Ding an sich" (das würde eben die reine folgenlose Wahrheit sein) ist auch dem Sprachbildner ganz unfaßlich und ganz und gar nicht erstrebenswert. Er bezeichnet nur die Relationen der Dinge zu den Menschen und nimmt zu deren Ausdrücke die kühnsten Metaphern zu Hilfe.⁸ (2-3)

A word is the result of a nerve stimuli translating itself into sound, expressing the designated representation for a given concept or object which has been assigned to it over time. These hardened words haunt Nietzsche as a process of murderous metaphors. Nietzsche understands language literally as a system of metaphors which ultimately reign as morally true. Words are entirely arbitrary forms which attempt to capture and contain stimulus and experience. This

⁷ In English: "And besides, what about these linguistic conventions themselves? Are they perhaps products of knowledge, that is, of the sense of truth? Are designations congruent with things? Is language the adequate expression of all realities?" (Large 116).

⁸ In English: "What is a word? It is the copy in sound of a nerve stimulus...What arbitrary assignments! How far this oversteps the canons of certainty!...The "thing in itself" (which is precisely what the pure truth, apart from any of its consequences would be) is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for. This creator only designates the relations of things to men, and for expressing these relations he lays hold of the boldest metaphors" (Large 116).

deeply disturbs Nietzsche, since he sees the possibilities of language as being much greater than the constraints which we have applied to it. The issue is that over time we forget that the original metaphors are only metaphors, and we operate as though they are representative of something in itself.⁹ The thing in itself, as Nietzsche mentions, is truly not worth striving for. Language is thus trapped in the moral realm of truth since its utility relies on its ability to ensure preservation of the individual and of mankind.¹⁰

Nietzsche goes through the process of linguistic formation and development closely in order to display its utility for expressing truth. After his linguistic analysis, Nietzsche shifts the focus to what truth is through the expression of language.

Was ist also Wahrheit? Ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen, kurz eine Summe von menschlichen Relationen, die poetisch und rhetorisch gesteigert, übertragen, geschmückt wurden, und die nach langem Gebrauch einem Volke fest, kanonisch und verbindlich dünken: die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, daß sie welche sind, Metaphern, die abgenutzt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind, Münzen, die ihr Bild verloren haben und nun als Metall, nicht mehr als Münzen, in Betracht kommen...wahrhaft zu sein, das heißt die usuellen Metaphern zu brauchen, also moralisch ausgedrückt: von der Verpflichtung, nach einer festen Konvention zu lügen, herdenweise in einem für alle verbindlichen Stile zu lügen.¹¹ (Nietzsche 3)

⁹ „Er vergißt also die originalen Anschauungsmetaphern als Metaphern und nimmt sie als die Dinge selbst“ (4).

¹⁰ “In einem ähnlichen beschränkten Sinne will der Mensch auch nur die Wahrheit: er begehrt die angenehmen, Leben erhaltenden Folgen der Wahrheit, gegen die reine folgenlose Erkenntnis ist er gleichgültig” (2). In English: “It is in a similarly restricted sense that man now wants nothing but truth: he desires the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth. He is indifferent toward pure knowledge which has no consequences” (Large 116).

¹¹ In English: “What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered metal and no longer as coins...to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors. Thus, to express it morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone” (Nietzsche 117).

This section of the text precisely and beautifully captures Nietzsche's concept of truth. He proclaims the essence of truth as it is understood through language: truth is a movable system of metaphors which have solidified over time. Truth is a world of illusions drained of any movable life force. To express truth morally is to utilize language according to the fixed conventions we have prescribed. As truth-tellers, we utilize a long forgotten and worn out shadowy metaphor when we *speak* of truth.

With this understanding of truth in mind, we must pause and ask, why does Nietzsche feel the need to liberate truth from morality? As we have seen, according to Nietzsche, truth functions as a kind of peace treaty in society, allowing us to live and communicate with one another. It seems clear that there is indeed some benefit that comes from truth. Given these benefits, why does Nietzsche nonetheless urge us to think *im außermoralischen Sinne*?¹² The answer to this question can be found in the political implications which arise in the realm of moral truth:

Im Bereich jener Schemata nämlich ist etwas möglich, was niemals unter den anschaulichen ersten Eindrücken gelingen möchte: eine pyramide Ordnung nach Kasten und Graden aufzubauen, eine neue Welt von Gesetzen, Privilegien, Unterordnungen, Grenzbestimmungen zu schaffen, die nun der andern anschaulichen Welt der ersten Eindrücke gegenübertritt, als das Festere, Allgemeinere, Bekanntere, Menschlichere und daher als das Regularisierende und Imperativische. Während jede Anschauungsmetapher individuell und ohne ihresgleichen ist und deshalb allem Rubrizieren immer zu entfliehen weiß, zeigt der große Bau der Begriffe die starre Regelmäßigkeit eines römischen Kolumbariums und atmet in der Logik jene Strenge und Kühle aus, die der Mathematik zu eigen ist.¹³ (4)

¹² In English: "in a nonmoral sense." Significantly, as previously noted, *außermoralisch* can be translated as both 'extra-moral' or 'non-moral'. However, 'außer' can also be translated as 'beyond'. In this case Nietzsche is speaking of morality neither as an absolute or obsolete thing, but rather he is aiming beyond morality.

¹³ In English: "For something is possible in the realm of schemata which could never be achieved with the vivid first impressions: the constructions of a pyramidal order according to castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, and clearly marked boundaries—a new world, one which now confronts the other vivid world of impressions as more solid, more universal, better known, and more human than the immediately perceived world, and thus as the regulative and imperative world. Whereas each perceptual metaphor is individual

In this realm of truth, this individual is prohibited from designating their own names for things on the basis of intuition or perceptual impression. Instead, individuals are obligated to comply with fixed and set structures of meaning and truth. Various power structures are established in the realm of truth, which reify arbitrary truths and values to reign in society. As I have mentioned prior, it is important to note that Nietzsche is not denying the utilitarian benefits that come from truth as such. He himself notes that, were we to do away with our fundamental drive towards truth, we would do away with ourselves.¹⁴ Nietzsche is, however, urging us to consider what is lost in the acquisition of truth, and what might become possible in a world in which we liberate truth from its moral constraints.

What is fundamental for the liberation of truth from morality is the resurrection of truth's fluidity, which is displayed in Nietzsche's understanding of truth. According to Nietzsche truth is "ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen..."¹⁵ (3). While Nietzsche focuses on the hardened laws of truth in a moral sense in the following sentences, this initial definition of truth importantly acknowledges the possibility for truth to exist as a thing of movement or *Bewegung*, something movable, or *beweglich*, something lively or *lebendig*. Truth does not have to remain in the binds of concrete concepts and hardened metaphors. Reclaiming the moving, living, and fluid essence of metaphors, concepts, and truth itself allows Nietzsche to signal toward a different way of using language—a way that is in tune with and representative of

and without equals and is therefore able to elude all classification, the great edifice of concepts displays the rigid regularity of a Roman columbarium" (Large 118).

¹⁴"Jener Trieb zur Metapherbildung, jener Fundamentaltrieb des Menschen, den man keinen Augenblick wegrechnen kann, weil man damit den Menschen selbst wegrechnen würde" (Nietzsche 6). In English: The drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself" (Large 121).

¹⁵ In English: a movable host of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms.

the intuitive nature of individual experience. The question as to *how* to create and engage with truth fluidly will be the subject of the second section of this chapter.

II. *The Liberation of Morality from Truth*

Artistic Creation

The second section of *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* further examines the possibilities and conditions of truth. Having liberated truth from the constraints of morality, Nietzsche shifts towards the consideration of morality as something freed from the constraints of truth and rather as an object of individual artistic creation. Here, Nietzsche speaks to the realm of art and myth-making specifically:

Er [der Fundamentaltrieb das Menschen zur Metaphernbildung] sucht sich ein neues Bereich seines Wirkens und ein anderes Flußbette und findet es im *Mythus* und überhaupt in der Kunst. Fortwährend verwirrt er die Rubriken und Zellen der Begriffe, dadurch daß er neue Übertragungen, Metaphern, Metonymien hinstellt, fortwährend zeigt er die Begierde, die vorhandene Welt das wachen Menschen so bunt unregelmäßig, folgenlos unzusammenhängend, reizvoll und ewig neu zu gestalten, wie es die Welt des Traumes ist.¹⁶ (Nietzsche 6)

In the realm of art and myth-making, the drive to create metaphors is unhampered by the constraints of truth. Here, language is fashioned in a colorful manner which aims to bring words to life, creating lively unconventional metaphors, as opposed to the great columbarium of concepts, the graveyard of perceptions.¹⁷ The continual movement of refashioning done in the creation of myth and art allows for fluid individual experience and interaction with the world. In

¹⁶ In English: “It [the fundamental human drive toward the formation of metaphors] seeks a new realm and another channel for its activity, and finds this in *myth* and in *art* generally. This drive continually confuses the conceptual categories and cells by bringing forward new transferences, metaphors, and metonymies. It continually manifests an ardent desire to refashion the world which presents itself to waking man, so that it will be as colorful, irregular, lacking in results and coherence, charming, and eternally new as the world of dreams” (Large 121).

¹⁷ This is a reference to Nietzsche’s metaphorical graveyard mentioned in the text (Large 121).

other words, the world of myth and art allows for understanding through intuitive perceptual means. Thus we see that what is gained in the reclaiming of truth from morality is not just a new understanding of truth as metaphor, but a new sense of the individual as artist of metaphors.

The Rational and the Intuitive Man

Nietzsche ends the essay by offering up two figures that utilize language differently: the rational man and the intuitive man. He writes,

Es gibt Zeitalter, in denen der vernünftige Mensch und der intuitive Mensch nebeneinander stehn, der eine in Angst vor der Intuition, der andere mit Hohn über die Abstraktion; der letztere ebenso unvernünftig, als der erstere unkünstlerisch ist. Beide begehren über das Leben zu herrschen: dieser indem er durch Vorsorge, Klugheit, Regelmäßigkeit den hauptsächlichsten Nöten zu begegnen weiß, jener, indem er als erin, "überfroher Held" jene Nöte nicht sieht und nur das zum Schein und zur Schönheit verstellte Leben als real nimmt.¹⁸ (Nietzsche 7)

The rational man clings to hardened dead concepts while the intuitive man lives in a world of utter abstraction. The rational man draws conclusions through the conceptual frameworks of predetermined understanding, rather than understanding through the perceptual framework (which the intuitive man is drawn towards). The intuitive man operates in artistic chaos which clings to neither concepts nor designations to understand the world. It is as though the rational man represents the sort of truth still bound to the constraints of morality, as demonstrated in the first section of the essay, while the intuitive man shows the dangers of a morality entirely unbound from any notion of truth, reliant purely upon abstract artistic creation. Nietzsche

¹⁸ In English: "There are ages in which the rational man and the intuitive man stand side by side, the one in fear of intuition, the other with scorn for abstraction. The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic. They both desire to rule over life: the former, by knowing how to meet his principal needs by means of foresight, prudence, and regularity; the latter by disregarding these needs and, as an "overjoyed hero," counting as real only that life which has been disguised as illusion and beauty" (Large 122).

refrains from privileging one above the other, thereby calling upon the reader to evaluate these usages of language themselves and forging their own linguistic path. He is not asking the reader to evaluate which of the two figures would be the better role model.

Instead Nietzsche suggests that both rational and intuitive perspectives are essential for understanding reality. He criticizes the rational man for imposing false order and absolutes upon the world through lifeless language, while the intuitive man, although closer to a direct experience of reality, lacks the ability to communicate or share these experiences effectively due to their ineffability. Neither figure is the answer but both are essential. Nietzsche is warning the reader against pursuing either of the two figures, ultimately urging the reader to evaluate on their own terms how they ought best to deal with truth and morality through the creation of metaphors.

It is clear that it is dangerous to live in a world of chaos and abstraction, yet it is also harmful to remain submerged in a world of constrained concepts. It seems like Nietzsche leaves us with no guide as to how to navigate the world—this is not the case. Nietzsche guides the readers towards reevaluation of *both* rational and intuitive experience to further think about the benefits *and* dangers within both modes of understanding. There is no solution or simple *how to* guide with the key. Understanding is a continuous fluid effort which utilizes truth as a reference point, morality as a guideline, and language as a tool.

CHAPTER TWO: Nietzsche's Attempt to Dance

Introduction

The middle period of Nietzsche's writing contains perplexing works which move in new stylistic and conceptual directions from his earlier work. Perhaps the most prominently studied of this period is *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, a narrative text rife with metaphor and symbolism that follows the speeches of Nietzsche's philosophical anti-hero, Zarathustra. Nietzsche's narrative exploration, guided by the striking and bold Zarathustra, is unlike any other work within both the history of philosophy and in Nietzsche's own oeuvre. Written in four parts, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* is truly, like the subtitle reads, "Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen."¹⁹ While the form of this text plays with novel structures and metaphors, I will argue that it nonetheless should be read as a culmination of Nietzsche's early philosophy of language. Specifically, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* attempts to preserve and ennoble Nietzsche's philosophy through an act of poetic translation. The figure of Zarathustra stands as poet and creator that Nietzsche speaks personally through. Through the narrative form and metaphorical speeches of Zarathustra, Nietzsche is able to put his vision of what philosophy should look like into words.

Historical Context

Marking the end of Nietzsche's middle period, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* emerges as an experimental explosion of literature and philosophy. He took on the project merely a year after the completion of Books 1-4 of *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* in 1882. Nietzsche wrote *Also*

¹⁹ In English: "A Book for Everyone and No One"

Sprach Zarathustra over the course of two years, completing the text in 1885. While Zarathustra the figure is first introduced at the end of his aphoristic work in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, it isn't until *Also Sprach Zarathustra* that Nietzsche embraces literature and poetry. Its figurative language provides accessibility for readers with little background in philosophy to engage with the material; however, when the text is examined philosophically, it often lacks the clarity associated with technical philosophical structures. In this sense, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* exists as a fresh work of fiction which aims to reach an audience of “all and none.”

For further guidance in approaching the text, Nietzsche later provides a text with exhaustive efforts to reflect and defend *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. In his 1888 work titled *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche reflects on not just his beloved Z, but also practically his entire life's work text by text.²⁰ Nietzsche provides stern and passionate statements throughout his meditations specifically on *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. He claims that Zarathustra stands on its own as a profound text which presents itself as a strange and novel poetic narrative. With deep and genuine yearning, Nietzsche reflects on the text in writing:

Mein Zarathustra zum Beispiel sucht einstweilen noch nach Solchen — ach! er wird noch lange zu suchen haben! — Man muss dessen werth sein, ihn zu hören... Und bis dahin wird es Niemanden geben, der die Kunst, die hier verschwendet worden ist, begreift: es hat nie Jemand mehr von neuen, von unerhörten, von wirklich erst dazu geschaffnen Kunstmitteln zu verschwenden gehabt. Dass dergleichen gerade in deutscher Sprache möglich war, blieb zu beweisen: ich selbst hätte es vorher am härtesten abgelehnt. Man weiss vor mir nicht, was man mit der deutschen Sprache kann, — was man überhaupt mit der Sprache kann. — Die Kunst des grossen Rhythmus, der grosse Stil der Periodik zum Ausdruck eines ungeheuren Auf und Nieder von sublimer, von übermenschlicher, Leidenschaft ist erst von mir entdeckt; mit einem Dithyrambus wie dem letzten des

²⁰ It is significant to note Nietzsche's mental and physical state of being at the time of his self reflection. *Ecce Homo* was written twelve years before his death, and two years before his descent into madness. The last decade of his life was a time of agonizing mental and physical decay. Under the 'care' of his sister Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, Nietzsche remained hidden away from the world before descending fully into dementia. Thus, in the years before his mind slipped away he thought it important to reflect on his life.

dritten Zarathustra, „die sieben Siegel“ überschrieben, flog ich tausend Meilen über das hinaus, was bisher Poesie hiess.²¹ (Nietzsche *NS EH*)

In Nietzsche's words there is a great emphasis on the text as something absolutely new and transformative—as something not only unlike anything else *he* had written, but unlike *anything* written within the German language entirely. His ego rides on a high horse through fragile hilltops. He arrogantly regards his work as exceptionally ingenious art. His confidence (in the text, at least) is not *entirely* unfounded due to its much later success and reception. However, at the time of its publication it was misunderstood and generally regarded as entirely incomprehensible. Nietzsche notes time and time again that the time has not come yet for Zarathustra. He was in great distress about the reception of the text and its inability to be understood. The problem of being misunderstood is essential when approaching Nietzsche, as it will reappear tirelessly in his words. He felt his work—his art and soul would not reach readers because he was simply ahead of his time. It wouldn't be until about twenty years after his passing that his work would first be recognized with value. In many ways, he was correct.

Zarathustra is a figure who remains deeply personal and ingrained within Nietzsche. *Zarathustra* is indeed the only text he felt so strongly about that he felt the need to continuously communicate and recommunicate his intent. In this way, Zarathustra the figure never really left Nietzsche or his works following *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. And yet, it is the only 'narrative' text

²¹ In English: “Meanwhile my Zarathustra, for instance, is still in quest of such people—alas! he will have to seek a long while yet! A man must be worthy of listening to him.... And, until that time, there will be no one who will understand the art that has been squandered in this book. No one has ever existed who has had more novel, more strange, and purposely created art forms to fling to the winds. The fact that such things were possible in the German language still awaited proof; formerly, I myself would have denied most emphatically that it was possible. Before my time people did not know what could be done with the German language—what could be done with language in general. The art of grand rhythm, of grand style in periods, for expressing the tremendous fluctuations of sublime and superhuman passion, was first discovered by me: with the dithyramb entitled "The Seven Seals," which constitutes the last discourse of the third part of *Zarathustra*, I soared miles above all that which heretofore has been called poetry” (Large 513).

he ever published. He never returned to the narrative style, despite his constant return to the figure of Zarathustra.

Nietzsche additionally claims that *Zarathustra* emerges as a text which stands alone among his writings²². The text's novelty is not the root cause of its independence for Nietzsche. Largely due to its dense and confusing artistic nature, rather, it stands alone as a philosophical text which truly needs to be spoken and *heard*. This is made especially clear in passages where he emphasizes hearing the words and feeling the movement of the text. He writes,

— Innerhalb meiner Schriften steht für sich mein Zarathustra. Ich habe mit ihm der Menschheit das grösste Geschenk gemacht, das ihr bisher gemacht worden ist. Dies Buch, mit einer Stimme über Jahrtausende hinweg, ist nicht nur das höchste Buch, das es giebt, das eigentliche Höhenluft-Buch — die ganze Thatsache Mensch liegt in ungeheurer Ferne unter ihm —, es ist auch das tiefste, das aus dem innersten Reichthum der Wahrheit heraus geborene, ein unerschöpflicher Brunnen, in den kein Eimer hinabsteigt, ohne mit Gold und Güte gefüllt heraufzukommen. Hier redet kein „Prophet“, keiner jener schauerlichen Zwitter von Krankheit und Willen zur Macht, die man Religionsstifter nennt. Man muss vor Allem den Ton, der aus diesem Munde kommt, diesen halkyonischen Ton richtig hören, um dem Sinn seiner Weisheit nicht erbarmungswürdig Unrecht zu tun.²³ (Nietzsche *NS* EH)

Again, in this reflection we hear Nietzsche's call for *Zarathustra* to reach readers' ears. He insists on the text as a speech to be *heard*—that Zarathustra speaks with a voice only for those ready to

²² It is also necessary here to emphasize what Nietzsche intends when he claims that *Also Sprach Zarathustra* stands alone. One may interpret this as meaning it is a text entirely separate from any of his other works; that it should be read on its own as an individual piece. To think this would be a harmful reduction of Nietzsche's philosophy and unproductive for a richer understanding of *Zarathustra*. Additionally, Nietzsche conflicts this statement elsewhere in *Ecce Homo*, as well as within various correspondence.

²³ In English: Within my writings my *Zarathustra* stands by itself. I have with this book given mankind the greatest gift that has ever been given it. With a voice that speaks across millenia, it is not only the most exalted book that exists, the actual book of the air of the heights—the entire fact that man lies at a tremendous distance *beneath* it—it is also the *profoundest*, born out of the innermost abundance of truth, an inexhaustible well into which no bucket descends without coming up filled with gold and goodness. Here there speaks no 'prophet', none of those gruesome hybrids of sickness and will to power called founders of religions. One has above all to *hear* correctly the tone that proceeds from this mouth, this halcyon tone, if one is not to do pitiable injustice to the meaning of wisdom. (Large 501)

correctly *hear* him. The reader is left by themselves to figure out what this means. What is necessary for one to properly be able to receive the ‘prophetic’ message of Zarathustra. The question of understanding and the problem of misunderstanding is apparent here. As a text that speaks to all and none, for those ready to hear its wisdom, it becomes even more clear that Nietzsche knows it will not be understood in its time.

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I. Zarathustra’s Untergehen

Also Sprach Zarathustra consists of a prologue followed by four sections all categorized as discourse. In this sense, the text is consistent in its will to be spoken and heard. Each section is intended to be read as a speech or meditative discourse delivered through the figure of Zarathustra. The prologue alone contains some of the most essential ideas which Nietzsche carries throughout the narrative. For the scope of this project, my reading of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* will focus primarily on this portion of the text. However, I will also touch on sections from parts II and III, where Zarathustra is mentioned as a poet and creator.

The prologue’s opening lines repeat the final fragment found in Nietzsche’s *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, which sends Zarathustra off on his journey. Here, Nietzsche establishes

Zarathustra as an isolated spirit emerging from the mountains speaking to a great star about becoming man again. Thus begins Zarathustra's *untergehen*.²⁴ I will now shift to a close reading of several portions of the text itself which best demonstrate Zarathustra as the misunderstood poet and creator. In doing so, I intend to further explore how the poetic form and language specific to this text allowed for Nietzsche to express himself in an incredibly personal and dense fashion.

Described as a dancer and a child, Zarathustra wanders into the town below where he speaks to the people about the gifts and teachings he has to offer. In this first town, Zarathustra fears his gifts will not be well received, as what he has to say has not yet been heard.²⁵ This notion of understanding and being heard, or lack thereof, is a key theme throughout the text which speaks more largely to Nietzsche's insecurity surrounding the reception of his philosophy. This detail further emphasizes the importance of language, form and structure for communicating his thoughts effectively.

Zarathustra quickly moves to the next town where he finds himself in a market square among the townspeople, surrounding a tight-rope walker. It is here that Zarathustra attempts to enlighten the crowd with the figure of the *Übermensch*²⁶; a figure new to Nietzsche's philosophy, yet representative of preexisting ideas. Zarathustra emerges as a figure to demonstrate the overcoming of mankind. In his process of teaching the *Übermensch*, he utilizes the verb

²⁴ Translated as down-going or under-going.

²⁵ "This old saint has not yet heard in his forest that *God is dead!*" (*Large 255*). This quotation is in reference to the declaration that 'God is dead!' from aphorism 125 from Nietzsche's earlier work *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. This speaks to the nature of Zarathustras teachings as being parallel to Nietzsche's own.

²⁶ The *Übermensch* has often been misread and mistranslated as 'superman' or 'above man'. Consequently the term is often misunderstood politically and poetically. The translation of the *Übermensch* as the Overman is indeed fitting to its meaning, however employing the original language best preserves Nietzsche's style for this project.

*überwinden*²⁷ as an essential element of the Übermensch. *Überwinden* evokes a sense of movement that guides us with no fixed solution or method of overcoming. The fluid language he employs demonstrates a deeper element of transformation and of fluid concepts that beg not to be confined to a single way of understanding. The fluidity of Nietzsche's language hints back to his essay *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*, in that his words are not confined to a single 'truthful' interpretation or moral viewpoint. The emphasis and repetition of processes and figures which demonstrate the property of 'über' make this especially clear, as über indicates an all aroundness in motion. Nietzsche's language relating to movement and placement, in this sense, help to establish the transposable nature of his philosophy.

A key example of Nietzsche's fluidity of language is found in Zarathustra's first speech about the Übermensch. Zarathustra exclaims:

Wahrlich, ein schmutziger Strom ist der Mensch. Man muss schon ein Meer sein, um einen schmutzigen Strom aufnehmen zu können, ohne unrein zu werden.

Seht, ich lehre euch den Übermenschen: der ist dieses Meer, in ihm kann eure grosse Verachtung untergehen.

Was ist das Grösste, das ihr erleben könnt? Das ist die Stunde der grossen Verachtung. Die Stunde, in der euch auch euer Glück zum Ekel wird und ebenso eure Vernunft und eure Tugend.²⁸ (Nietzsche *NS ASZ*)

There is no clear moral or philosophical stance taken in these words. It is a call to reflect critically on one's own reason, values, and virtues. The reference to 'going under' implies that Zarathustra himself is on the path of the Übermensch, as he himself has been established as being on the journey of *untergehen*. In this sense, Zarathustra himself is a figure exemplifying

²⁷ Translated as overcoming.

²⁸ In English: In truth, man is a polluted river. One must be a sea to receive a polluted river and not be defiled. Behold, I teach you the Overman: he is this sea, in him your great contempt can go under. What is the greatest thing you can experience? It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness grows loathsome to you, and your reason and your virtue also" (Large 256).

the process of overcoming necessary to become a sea amongst polluted waters. He speaks to the crowds, urging the very same process of overcoming that he is undergoing. Zarathustra's convoluted and metaphorical language acts as a disguise or costume for Nietzsche's philosophy.

Upon these grand declarations of overcoming, the crowd disappoints Zarathustra by laughing at him and shouting for the tight-rope walker, who emerges in the square. Zarathustra then attempts to use the tight-rope walker as a teaching moment. He speaks to the crowd:

Der Mensch ist ein Seil, geknüpft zwischen Thier und Übermensch, — ein Seil über einem Abgrunde.

Ein gefährliches Hinüber, ein gefährliches Auf-dem-Wege, ein gefährliches Zurückblicken, ein gefährliches Schaudern und Stehenbleiben.

Was gross ist am Menschen, das ist, dass er eine Brücke und kein Zweck ist: was geliebt werden kann am Menschen, das ist, dass er ein Übergang und ein Untergang ist.²⁹

(Nietzsche *NS ASZ*)

This image of man as the rope provides an excellent understanding of *untergehen* and its role as movement rather than a goal. It is crucial that one reads this metaphor without mistaking man for the tight-rope walker moving from side to side. Rather, man is the rope which hangs suspended above that which we simply cannot know, fastened between animal and Übermensch. Man is a bridge and not a goal. Nietzsche emphasizes this bridge as an example of movement and fluidity, like that of the sea³⁰ to ensure that his philosophy dances.

Despite these attempts, yet again the crowd simply laughs and dismisses his voice. In defeat, Zarathustra speaks to his heart: “sie verstehen mich nicht, ich bin nicht der Mund für

²⁹ In English: Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Overman—a rope over an abyss. A dangerous going-across, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and staying-still. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what can be loved in man is that he is a *going-across* and a *down-going*” (Large 257).

³⁰ Referring to the quote on top of pg. 4 “In truth, man is a polluted river...”

diese Ohren”³¹ (Nietzsche *NS ASZ*). Here, again we see Zarathustra embrace that he will not be understood before moving on to the next crowd. He repeats this exact phrase once more later in the prologue, which further demonstrates the importance of reception and audience in regards to the style of the text. In these words there is a certain arrogance yet agony within being misunderstood.

This is consistent with Nietzsche's own reflections on being misunderstood. This further shows the parallel between Zarathustra and Nietzsche. Zarathustra stands as a poetic figure who Nietzsche felt he could more accessibly express himself through. It is clear that Zarathustra (and thus Nietzsche) are aware that their time has not yet come and that what they say will not be heard—and yet they persist. This detail leaves the reader somewhat uncertain as to how much of the text is philosophically decipherable; it leaves the reader asking themselves how much they can understand of Nietzsche. The arrogance of being misunderstood brings forth an ironic tone of voice that is a large part of why this text is one of Nietzsche’s most closely studied. The prologue stands as an explosive collection of metaphors and symbolic images that Nietzsche plays out through the character of Zarathustra. Zarathustra is the culminating figure that expresses the dense unconventional reworking of language that allows for such a successful reception of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

Beyond the prologue, Part II of the text offers further insight into Zarathustra, especially as a poet. In the speech titled “Von den Dichtern,”³² one of Zarathustra’s disciples reminds him that he once said that poets lie too much. Zarathustra makes things worse for himself by saying, “Doch was sagte dir einst Zarathustra? Dass die Dichter zuviel lügen? — Aber auch Zarathustra

³¹ In English: “They do not understand me, I am not the mouth for these ears” (Large 258).

³² In English: On the Poets.

ist ein Dichter. Glaubst du nun, dass er hier die Wahrheit redete? Warum glaubst du das?”³³

(Nietzsche *NS ASZ*). This question ‘do you believe that he speaks the truth here’ demands the reader to step back and ask that of Nietzsche. It is hard to believe a self-declared liar, and yet the reader continues to engage with the text. If the aim is not an insight into truth, we must ask ourselves, what are we reading for?

To conclude my close reading on sections of Zarathustra, I will now turn to Part III, “Von alten und neuen Tafeln.”³⁴ This portion of the text examines the old and new tablets of mankind which generally represent morality and truth—they represent the mutual human code of conduct to hold certain truths and morals which we have agreed upon and established through language.³⁵

Zarathustra begins:

Hier sitze ich und warte, alte zerbrochene Tafeln um mich und auch neue halb beschriebene Tafeln. Wann kommt meine Stunde?
— die Stunde meines Niederganges, Unterganges: denn noch Ein Mal will ich zu den Menschen gehn.
Dess warte ich nun: denn erst müssen mir die Zeichen kommen, dass es meine Stunde sei, — nämlich der lachende Löwe mit dem Taubenschwarme.
Inzwischen rede ich als Einer, der Zeit hat, zu mir selber. Niemand erzählt mir Neues: so erzähle ich mir mich selber.³⁶ (Nietzsche *NS ASZ*)

In this section Zarathustra asks himself once more when the time will come in which his word will finally be understood. He strangely emphasizes that in the meantime he can only talk to himself, saying, ‘so I tell myself to myself.’ He is speaking to no one *but* himself. And that ‘he’

³³ In English: “Yet what did Zarathustra once say to you? That the poets lie too much? – But Zarathustra too is a poet. Do you believe that he speaks the truth here? Why do you believe that?” (Pippin 99).

³⁴ In English: On Old and New Tablets.

³⁵ Here it helps to once again look back to Nietzsche’s essay *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*.

³⁶ In English: “Here I sit and wait, old broken tablets around me and also new tablets only partially written upon. When will my hour come? – the hour of my going down, going under: for I want to return to mankind once more. This is what I wait for now; signs must come to me first that it is *my* hour – namely the laughing lion with a swarm of doves. Meanwhile I talk to myself as one who has time. No one tells me anything new, and so I tell myself to myself’ (Pippin 156).

is *really* Nietzsche speaking through Zarathustra, using Z's mouth for *his* words. The importance of being understood pains Nietzsche, but he knows it's of no use to speak as though he will be heard in *Zarathustra*. The reference to laughter reminds the reader of the crowds of laughter Zarathustra was met with throughout the prologue. He goes on,

Als ich zu den Menschen kam, da fand ich sie sitzen auf einem alten Dünkel: Alle dünkten sich lange schon zu wissen, was dem Menschen gut und böse sei. Eine alte müde Sache dünkte ihnen alles Reden von Tugend; und wer gut schlafen wollte, der sprach vor Schlafengehen noch von "Gut" und "Böse."
— dass ich nämlich in Gleichnissen rede und gleich Dichtern hinke und stammle: und wahrlich, ich schäme mich, dass ich noch Dichter sein muss! —
Denn muss nicht dasein, über das getanzt, hinweggetanzt werde? Müssen nicht um der Leichten, Leichtesten willen — Maulwürfe und schwere Zwerge dasein? —.³⁷ (Nietzsche NS ASZ)

Zarathustra is clear in his othering from mankind. Here he speaks to good and evil as worn out virtues, old tablets, which still lead humanity. Zarathustra, at this point interchangeable with Nietzsche, feels a great sense of shame that his philosophy is, in a sense, sentenced or reduced to flowery and convoluted poetic language and narrative form. Even then, he is still misunderstood in his poetic form. Still, in order to break away from mankind's old tablets, he has no choice but to turn to poetry in order to dance beyond morality. The nod to good and evil serves as a reminder back to his fundamental statements on good and evil in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*, and foreshadows *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886).

³⁷ In English: "When I came to mankind, I found them sitting on an old conceit: they all conceited to have known for a long time what is good and evil for humanity. To them all talk of virtue seemed an old worn out thing; and whoever wanted to sleep well even spoke about "good" and "evil" before going to bed...I must speak in parables and limp and stutter like the poets; and truly, I am ashamed that I must still be a poet!-...For must there not exist something *over* which one dances, dances away? Must not, for the sake of the light and the lightest—moles and heavy dwarves exist?" (Pippin 156-158).

II. *A Misunderstood Nietzsche*

Upon any reading of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, its richness and originality is abundantly clear—yet it is also clear in examining the text parallel to his other works that *Zarathustra* undeniably functions as a culminating piece of Nietzsche’s pre-existing philosophy.

While his reflections in *Ecce Homo* and his various letters focus on *Zarathustra*’s striking novelty, Nietzsche also hints strongly towards the piece as a sort of poetic translation done on the basis of reception and accessibility. The echoes of his early philosophy of language ring like a bell for readers ready to lend an ear. The dancing spirit of Nietzsche persists through *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche himself acknowledges this spirit endlessly until his death.

In a letter dated February 6, 1884, written to Franz Overbeck—a dear old friend in Basel, Nietzsche refers to *Zarathustra* as an accumulation of forces that had been within him for decades. The letter’s subject matter focuses on rather mundane misfortunes discussed in previous correspondence before an abrupt shift to mention *Zarathustra*. After complaining about the cost of a craftsman’s work, Nietzsche writes:

Übrigens ist der ganze Zarathustra eine Explosion von Kräften, die Jahrzehende lang sich aufgehäuft haben: bei solchen Explosionen kann der Urheber leicht selber mit in die Luft gehen. Mir ist öfter so zu Mute: — das will ich Dir nicht verbergen. Und ich weiß im Voraus: wenn Du aus dem Finale ersehen wirst, was mit der ganzen Symphonie eigentlich gesagt werden soll (— sehr artistisch und schrittweise, wie man etwa einen Thurm baut), — so wirst auch Du, mein alter treuer Freund, einen heillosen Schrecken und Schauer nicht überwinden können.³⁸ (Nietzsche NS EH)

³⁸ In English: “The whole of *Zarathustra* is an explosion of forces that have been accumulating over decades: in such explosions the author can easily be blown up himself. I often feel like this: I don’t want to hide that from you. And I know in advance: when you see from the finale what the whole symphony is actually supposed to say (very artistic and step-by-step, like building a tower), you too, my old faithful friend, will have one cannot overcome the hopeless terror and shudder” (Large 516).

Here, Nietzsche describes *Zarathustra* as an almost inevitable explosion of thoughts which had been lurking in the depths of his work for so long. He sees his works as a guide which all lead up to *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. In viewing *Zarathustra* as a culminating point for Nietzsche's philosophy, any reader is able to gain a deeper understanding of the text with the help of his prior works. His musical language in comparing his philosophy to a symphony is both consistent and accurate with the aim of *Zarathustra* as a piece of philosophy which, in a sense, dances.³⁹ Nietzsche's words to Overbeck indicate *Zarathustra* as a collection of forces ever present in his heart.

This understanding complicates Nietzsche's own meditations on the text in *Ecce Homo*. Nietzsche says repeatedly in *Ecce Homo* how original and unlike anything else *Zarathustra* is. At the same time, he contradicts himself in the letters where he also regards the text as a poetic reworking of prefigured philosophy gathered over decades. He claims the text stands alone⁴⁰ but then he writes:

Das Wesentliche ist, daß, um die Voraussetzungen für das Verständniß des Zarathustra zu haben (— ein Ereigniß ohne Gleichen in der Literatur und Philosophie und Poesie und Moral usw. usw. Sie dürfen mir's glauben, Sie glücklicher Besitzer dieses Wunderthiers! —) alle meine früheren Schriften ernstlich und tief verstanden sein müssen; insgleichen die Nothwendigkeit der Aufeinanderfolge dieser Schriften und der in ihnen sich ausdrückenden Entwicklung.⁴¹ (Nietzsche NS 29 August 1886 Letter)

Here, it seems clear that *all* of his earlier work must deeply be taken into consideration in order for an appropriate interaction with *Zarathustra*. It can be that the text *is* and stands alone in its

³⁹ "Perhaps the whole of *Zarathustra* may be reckoned as music; certainly a rebirth of the art of *hearing* was among its preconditions" (Kaufmann 751).

⁴⁰ "Within my writings my *Zarathustra* stands by itself" (Large 501).

⁴¹ In English: To have the prerequisite for understanding *Zarathustra*, *all* my earlier writings must be genuinely and profoundly understood; also the *necessity* of the sequence of these writings and the development expressed in them" (Nietzsche NS 29 August 1886 Letter).

uniqueness and in its transformed artistic form. It serves as a translational act of writing which utilizes artistic language on the basis of Nietzsche's perceived reception of the work. However this translation is a cultivation of already thoroughly articulated philosophy still not reaching the ears of Nietzsche's initial audience.

This act of poetic 'translation' begs the question: Why? Why transpose such dense, well thought out and structured philosophy to a convoluted poetic piece of prophetic fiction, especially if said fiction is causing the author such turmoil? Nietzsche's reflections on Zarathustra in *Ecce Homo*, his various letters, and even in the words of Zarathustra himself, demonstrate a constant agony that his work is not understood or appreciated. Thus far I have examined moments of Zarathustra where he retreats in defeat of not being understood by the people. Nietzsche too makes this defeat clear in the meditations of *Ecce Homo*. In distress, Nietzsche asks: "Hat man mich verstanden? — Ich habe eben kein Wort gesagt, das ich nicht schon vor fünf Jahren durch den Mund Zarathustras gesagt hätte."⁴² This question taunts Nietzsche so deeply that he chooses to end the text by repeating the phrase: "Hat man mich verstanden? — Dionysos gegen den Gekreuzigten..."⁴³ (Nietzsche *NS EH*). Here, Nietzsche's desperation is loud and clear. There is simply nothing else for him to say at this point that, like he himself notes, hasn't already been said. He is misunderstood.

However, as previously mentioned, Nietzsche's arrogance in being misunderstood suggests that a part of Nietzsche embraced that what he said simply wouldn't reach the ears of his time, and still he persisted with passion. *Zarathustra* is an attempt to play with form and language in a way he thought would perhaps make his philosophy more accessible (Ein Buch für

⁴² In English: "Have I been understood?—I have not said one word here that I did not say five years ago through the mouth of Zarathustra" (Kauffman 789).

⁴³ In English: Have I been understood?—Dionysus versus the Crucified" (Kauffman 791).

Alle und Keinen⁴⁴). He saw *Zarathustra* as his most significant work and his most precious philosophical mission yet. In a letter addressed to Heinrich Köselitz in August 1883, Nietzsche writes: “Im Einzelnen ist unglaublich Vieles persönlich Erlebte und Erlittne darin, das nur mir verständlich ist”⁴⁵ (Nietzsche *MS*). He is both vulnerable and arrogant in saying that *Zarathustra* is *only* comprehensible to him. Perhaps for this reason, being misunderstood still caused him great agony, despite the confidence he himself had for his teachings. *Zarathustra* meant everything to him—because it is an extremely personal culminating piece of what he truly believed.

The question of understanding comes into play especially when the personal nature of the text is considered. For a book targeted to all, *Zarathustra* certainly works through a lot of specific insecurities, which a reader unfamiliar with Nietzsche’s pride would struggle greatly to understand. For this reason, certain elements of the text will remain incomprehensible. With each return to the text, something new is gained. It is certainly a book meant to be read and reread.

While the text indeed attempts to sing its soul like Nietzsche intended, it is still ultimately bound to language, as it is a written piece of art. At this point, it is natural to ask why Nietzsche confined himself in the realm of words to convey his philosophy. For a critical man so intent on creating something which ‘sings’⁴⁶ and ‘dances,’ a man so harsh on the utilization of language, I *must* wonder he never ventured further into performance, music⁴⁷ and art beyond writing.

⁴⁴ Refer to Footnote 1.

⁴⁵ In English: There is in this book an incredible amount of personal experience and suffering that is comprehensible only to me.

⁴⁶ “It [The Birth of Tragedy] should have *sung* this “new soul”—and not spoken! What I had to say then—too bad that I did not dare say it as a poet: perhaps I had the ability” (Large 20). “Perhaps the whole of *Zarathustra* may be reckoned as music; certainly a rebirth of the art of *hearing* was among its preconditions” (Kauffman 751).

⁴⁷ To say that Nietzsche made absolutely no attempt at composing music would be misleading. Nietzsche composed a small number of piano compositions in his earlier period of philosophy.

Perhaps part of it had to do with Nietzsche's upbringing as a pastor's son in 19th century Germany, which limited his ability to create something beyond philosophy which still demonstrated his radical and beautiful mind. Still, he was able to create incredible works of philosophy which pushed the boundaries of convention for his time and audience. Though Nietzsche was ultimately unable to move beyond the written word, his philosophy later found its way into the art world.

CHAPTER THREE: Nietzschean Dadaism

Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have examined Nietzsche's work on language, particularly as it relates to questions of morality. Through the critical work of *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* and the creative shift of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Nietzsche leaves us with a futuristic and generative philosophy explicitly pointing us towards art. I will now shift to consider the artistic reception of Nietzsche's philosophy, which first appeared just over a decade after his death at the turn of the century. German art of the early 20th century gave rise to movements responsive to a Nietzschean call to reexamine and create language. Specifically, within the Dada movement there exists a clear dedication to a radical uprooting of convention through a complete overhaul and reimagining of language. Artists such as Hugo Ball, Hannah Höch, Tristan Tzara, and George Grosz stand as key figures in the Dada movement in both Zurich and Berlin, respectively. In this chapter, I will show how various forms of Dada media either coincide with or respond to Nietzsche's core principles and figures of language. The immense variety of art, manifestos, performances, and poetry which emerge from this period demonstrate a great respect and acknowledgement of a 'Nietzschean ethic.'

Historical Context

Dada, in simple terms, aimed to create a type of anti-art which drew from intuition with a great emphasis on movement, in every sense of the word. It was 'anti-art' because it condemned art concerned with imitation and rationality. The Dada movement began in the spring of 1916 in

Switzerland. A group of artists gathered at the Cabaret Voltaire, a bar in Zurich. Among the group was artist and poet Hugo Ball, who is often credited as the ‘father’ of Dada, alongside others such as Tristan Tzara⁴⁸.

Hugo Ball was well acquainted with the works of Nietzsche, as he completed an unpublished doctoral dissertation on Nietzsche in 1910, with further mentions of him in personal writings. Ball’s readings of Nietzsche without a doubt influenced his artistic exploration.⁴⁹ His work amplified a deep concern with language and underwent a critical reevaluation especially through poetry and performance. This is perhaps best displayed in his sound poem “Karawane,” which disrupts language through performance. However, it is important to note that Ball later on distanced himself from Nietzsche on religious grounds. Despite their later separation, Ball’s work, and the Dada movement more generally, was nonetheless influenced by Nietzsche’s philosophy.

The Dada movement in Zurich with Ball and others serves as a starting point for the more apparent Nietzschean influence found in Berlin. This is due to the fact that the Berlin dadaists were much more politically motivated than those in Zurich.⁵⁰ Both Zurich and Berlin Dada explored radical expression in this anti-art; however, Zurich’s art largely remained more playful, whereas in Berlin they shifted to emphasizing the more Nietzschean and political elements of Dada. This is exhibited most directly within the work of George Grosz. Between the years of 1915 and 1924 Grosz produced a portfolio of works all entitled “Ecce Homo,” which consisted

⁴⁸ Ball and Tzara, alongside George Grosz, will be the primary focus for this chapter due to their importance in the movement and deep awareness of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

⁴⁹“Hugo Ball was one of those moony souls at the dawn of the twentieth century whose sensibility was ravaged by reading Nietzsche” (Rasula 1).

⁵⁰ For instance, in 1920 at the First International Dada Fair in Berlin, one of the pieces reads: “Dada ist politisch” Translates to: Dada is political.

of eighty-four drawings and sixteen watercolours depicting a wide variety of religious and Nietzschean imagery.

Beyond Grosz there are more subtle yet nonetheless undeniable Nietzschean echoes within Dadaism to be examined. While the poetry and art of the time no doubt display this, the various manifestos of the movement are especially helpful in hearing these echoes. In examining Dada it is essential to turn to the manifestos to further understand the movements Nietzschean goals.

I. The Manifestos of Dadaism

Manifestos were an especially common practice of the art movements in the modernist avant-garde era, and Dadaism is no exception. The Manifesto as a form allows for the artist to declare their typically radical intent through a political means of expression. The various manifestos of Dadaism stand as the best means of further understanding the philosophical and artistic goals of the movement. For this reason it makes sense that the hints of Nietzsche in Dada come through most apparently in the words of the manifestos.

Hugo Ball's Dada Manifesto was written in 1916 and serves as a brief proclamation of a new tendency in art; one against that of conventional language. Dada is defined here as an international word—a word of fluidity and movement. It is unclear to the reader what exactly Dada 'should' look like or what sort of art it intends to create. It is however clear in its rejection of convention and fixed meaning. Dada repels logic through its nonsensical usage of words. In the middle of the passage Ball speaks directly to a linguistic break from convention.

Ich lese Verse, die nichts weniger vorhaben als: auf die Sprache zu verzichten. Dada
Johann Fuchsgang Goethe. Dada Stendhal. Dada Buddha, Dalai Lama, Dada m'dada,
Dada m'dada, Dada mhm' dada. Auf die Verbindung kommt es an, und dass sie vorher ein

bisschen unterbrochen wird. Ich will keine Worte, die andere erfunden haben. Alle Worte haben andere erfunden. Ich will meinen eigenen Unfug, und Vokale und Konsonanten dazu, die ihm entsprechen.⁵¹ (Ball 1)

Ball draws connections to various figures like Goethe and Buddha and places the Dada title upon them. He does so not in the hopes of utilizing the methods and words that have come before him, but instead to distinguish himself as an individual creator. Ball, as a dadaist, is concerned purely with a language and a rhythm all his own. The reader is left with an understanding of Dada as a highly personal and individual experience. This element of Dada further connects to Nietzsche's play with language and its function beyond tradition and purpose. Ball embodies this playful spirit and demands the same of Dada as a movement. For Ball, what it is or can be is confined to neither convention nor unity.

Ball ends the manifesto with a call to Nietzschean understanding of language as both arbitrary and social in formation and function.

Jede Sache hat ihr Wort; da ist das Wort selber zu Sache geworden. Warum kann der Baum nicht Pluplusch heissen, und Pluplubasch, wenn es geregnet hat? Und warum muss er überhaupt etwas heissen? Müssen wir denn überall unseren Mund dran hängen? Das Wort, das Wort, das Weh gerade an diesem Ort, das Wort, meine Herren, ist eine öffentliche Angelegenheit ersten Ranges.⁵² (1)

⁵¹ In English: "I shall be reading poems that are meant to dispense with conventional language, no less, and to have done with it. Dada Johann Fuchsgang Goethe, Dada Stendhal. Dada Buddha, Dalai Lama, Dada m'dada, Dada m'dada. It's a question of connections, and of loosening them up a bit to start with. I don't want words that other people have invented. All the words are other people's inventions. I want my own stuff, my own rhythm, and vowels and consonants too, matching the rhythm and all my own." (In some translations, Nietzsche has been added to the list of figures mentioned, which further speaks to how heavily the manifesto reeks of his philosophy in regards to language and convention).

⁵² In English: Each thing has its word, but the word has become a thing by itself. Why can't a tree be called Pluplusch, and Pluplubasch when it has been raining? And why does it need to be called anything? Do we have to hang our mouths on everything? The word, the word, the word, outside your domain, your stuffiness, this laughable impotence, your stupendous smugness, outside all the parrotry of your self-evident limitedness. The word, gentlemen, is a public concern of the first importance."

Ball inserts himself into an inevitably philosophical position with his words on words here. He speaks to the thing in itself just as Nietzsche has countless times in the past. There is to be no concern with that which simply cannot be understood— *Das Ding an sich*.⁵³ Ball's concern is also displayed in the manifesto in the same fluid and oral fashion as Nietzsche, as exhibited through the image of the mouth and of movement (“Müssen wir denn überall unseren Mund dran hängen⁵⁴” (1). Words are arbitrary, yet fragile in function, as they exist in a public realm with grand social repercussions. Ball's understanding of language reiterates Nietzsche's.

Tzara wrote his first Dada manifesto two years after Ball, in 1918. In total, Tzara completed seven different manifestos on Dadaism. These manifestos provide deeper insight on the movement that Ball's poetic and brief manifesto somewhat lack. His first manifesto emphasizes a separation from humanity in its morality and unity. Dada instead reaches for freedom from the collective, prioritizing the individual and experience as the guide for creation. Tzara's second manifesto especially contains some of the richest Nietzschean speech. Here, Tzara speaks to the significant role of experience in regards to arbitrary concepts like truth and logic.

There is no ultimate truth. The dialectic is an amusing mechanism which guides us/in a banal kind of way/to the opinions we had in the first place. Does anyone think that, by a minute refinement of logic, he has demonstrated the truth and established the correctness of these opinions? Logic imprisoned by the senses is an organic disease. To this element philosophers always like to add: the power of observation. But observe, we regard from one or more points of view, we choose them among millions that exist. Experience is also a product of chance and individual faculties. (Tzara 79)

⁵³ In English: The thing in itself.

⁵⁴ In English: ‘Do we have to hang our mouths on everything?’

These words from Tzara read as though they were written by Nietzsche. Both condemn a universal truth imprisoned by an arbitrary logic and speak through the language of illness and disgust, i.e. logic as a disease. Additionally, Tzara and Nietzsche both have an aversion to being reduced to a theory or philosophy. There is a separation from philosophy which is deeply Nietzschean to its core. Further, this separation helps to distinguish Dada as something that can't be understood rationally through theory or as a philosophy. Rather, it must be experienced with fluidity by the individual who forms their own truth. Zarathustra is a dadaist, in this sense.

There is mention of poetry and art most directly in Nietzschean terms in Tzara's fifth manifesto. Towards the end of it, he begs the question of poetry:

Is poetry necessary? I know that those who write most violently against it unconsciously desire to endow it with a comfortable perfection, and are working on this project right now;—they call this hygienic future. They contemplate the annihilation (always imminent) of art. At this point they desire more artistic art. Hygiene becomes purity of God. Must we cease to believe in words? Since when have they expressed the opposite of what the organ emitting them thinks and wants? Here is the great secret: *The thought is made in the mouth.* I still consider myself very charming. (87)

I'd like to think Tzara could be speaking to Nietzsche when he says "I know that those who write most violently against it unconsciously desire to endow it with a comfortable perfection, and are working on this project right now;—they call this hygienic future," for this (a poetic futuristic philosophy) was by and large Nietzsche's frustration and goal. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Nietzsche's agonizing relationship with poetry and form demonstrate his greater concern with language philosophically. Both Tzara and Nietzsche, even if hesitantly, turn to art as the place of liberating creation, especially concerning language. Tzara understands this place as the realm of Dada.

The thought is made in the mouth.

II. *The Art of Dada*

To better understand the Nietzschean ideas of Dada at play, it is important to examine some key works of the movement. There is a wide variety of Dada artworks and poems which can be seen as Nietzschean in one sense or another. However, for the scope of this project, I have limited my examination of such to two essential pieces to the Dada movement—‘Karawane’ by Hugo Ball and Hannah Höch’s *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands*.⁵⁵

I would first like to return to Ball’s sound poem ‘Karawane’ as a prime example of



essential Dada. Written in 1916, Ball originally performed the piece at the Cabaret Voltaire costumed in large cardboard tubes and a blue and white hat (as shown on the left). The poem consists of words or sounds unrecognizable to any established language (aside from familiar sounds to the German tongue). It is a poem that demands to be spoken and played with. There is no clear analytic meaning that can be

extracted from this art beyond personal experience and interaction with such. It serves as an exploration and repels any attempts to moralize or rationalize its content—to the extent that it may seem extraordinarily silly, partially because it is.

Aside from the content of the poem, the form itself must be visually examined. Each line of “Karawane” appears in a different font. There is no rhyme or reason to any of the various

⁵⁵ Translates to: ‘Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany’.

fonts; however, they each evoke a varying feeling upon examination. There are heavier and thinner fonts (as shown on the right) which emphasize certain words, which evokes an experience subjective to each reader or performer. It mocks traditional examinations of poetry and demands to exist purely as childlike sound and arbitrary form. This detail further demonstrates Ball's commitment to disrupting conventional form and tradition. His choice in forming sounds and words in such a random manner uplifts the Nietzschean cause.

"Karawane" has the same performative spoken playful quality of language which Nietzsche so greatly called out for.

KARAWANE
 jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla
 grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
 higo bloiko russula huju
 hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
 blago bung
bosso fataka
 u uu u
 schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta gôrem
 eschige zunbada
wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
tumba ba- umf
 kusagauma
ba - umf

Now I will shift to dadaist Hannah Höch's iconic photo-montage titled *Schnitt mit dem*



Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer

*Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands*⁵⁶ (1919-1920).

The piece was first exhibited at the First International Dada Fair in Berlin in 1920 alongside many others, despite sexist pushback from the male artists. Upon entry to the fair, viewers were bombarded with political images and slogans among artworks of varying media and form scattered around the entire room from floor to ceiling. The Fair contained work

⁵⁶See Footnote 53 for translation.

from many different artists, with some of the most notable (aside from Höch) being Jean Arp, Johannes Baader, Otto Dix, Max Ernst, George Grosz, Raoul Hausmann, and Wieland Herzfelde.

Höch utilizes a combination of found images from magazines and newspapers along with her own photographs to create a visual cacophony. It contains images of wheels and gears, historical figures such as Karl Marx, and various political phrases and statements among a repeating 'Dada' throughout. Upon first glance it seems there is no organization to the montage, yet upon closer examination, the political narrative of the piece gives it a semblance of structure. The top right section contains those belonging to what Höch dubs 'anti-Dada', while the bottom is full of dadaists. Here Höch is meditating on the future of Germany emerging from the complicated political climate apparent in the Weimar Republic. The chaotic disfigurement of images and generally overwhelming visuals of Höch's work helps to signify Dada's intentions to stray from convention and instead embrace chaos and irrationality through new creation. Here, she is very literally playing with and reconstructing pre-existing forms and notions by cutting and pasting these images.

It is clear that Nietzsche's philosophy is deeply embedded in the work of Dadaism. In artistically keeping Nietzsche's ideas alive, the dadaists began a previously impossible Nietzschean conversation. In understanding Dada as reception of Nietzsche's work, one is confronted with the task of further exploring how this embodiment perhaps confines a fluid understanding of Nietzsche. Dadaism is one place for Nietzsche's words to dance—it is by no means an end point or an ultimate answer to be found from his philosophy. It serves as an essential demonstration of a Nietzschean rebirth beyond just inspiration and influence. Dada's connection to Nietzsche is essential to understand one way in which convention and language are

able to roam liberated on page, canvas, performance and beyond. Dada is not merely similar or connected to Nietzsche's philosophy, but rather importantly it is the continuation of his work posthumously. Dada is where one must look to see where Nietzsche's agonizing call to be understood is first heard. Dada carries on Nietzsche's linguistic, and extraordinarily moral, legacy.

NIETZSCHEAN DANCE GUIDE

Step 1: *Dance.*

BERGEN DANCE GUIDE

Step 1: Ask yourself how you feel about dancing in front of others. *Really* moving your body in front of another. Find a partner or a group if you'd like to share this experience or proceed alone. (Even if you are doing this in a group, know that you are still alone).

Step 2: Go somewhere where you are free to move around. It does not matter if you are inside or outside, so long as you can roam about sufficiently.

Step 3: Choose a song that moves you. Whatever that means. Silence works too.*

Step 4: Play the music or sit in silence.

Step 5: Dance. Detach from your worldly binds.

*If you can't think of anything, here are some personal recommendations:

Come on Eileen by Dexys Midnight Runners

Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30 I. Prelude. Sonnenaufgang by Richard Strauss

Iota by Angel Olsen

Dancing Queen by ABBA

Golden Hours by Brian Eno

Ready to Run by The Chicks

4'33" by John Cage

Shake Everything You've Got by Maceo Parker

Mama Tried by Merle Haggard

Dance Yrself Clean by LCD Soundsystem

Islands In The Stream by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers

Passionfruit by Drake

Eyes of The World (Live at Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, NY 3/29/90) by The Grateful Dead

I Need Help Immediately by 100 gecs

Bejeweled by Taylor Swift

Red Wine Supernova by Chappell Roan

Dancing Through Life from "Wicked" by Stephen Schwartz

Wig In A Box from "Hedwig and The Angry Inch" by Stephen Trask

Time Warp from "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" by Richard Hartley and Richard O'Brien

My Old School by Steely Dan

This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody) by The Talking Heads

Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield

Believe by Cher

Help Yourself by Tom Jones

Night Moves by Bob Seger

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