

EDITOR'S NOTE

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In the rich landscape of challenges raised by the posthuman paradigm shift—crossed by new emerging technologies, environmental issues, and cultural, political, societal, and existential complexities—Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy provides a fertile foundation for exploring and critically inquiring into the intricacy of the present. This essay collection, *Nietzsche, Critical Posthumanism, and Transhumanism*, represents an incursion into Nietzsche's philosophical ideas by revealing the multifaceted influence of his legacy on the various posthuman schools of thought, including critical, speculative, existential, and philosophical posthumanism, and classic, and Euro-transhumanism. Nietzsche's legacy paved the way for postmodern philosophy through its radical critique of humanism and metaphysical tradition, universally valid values, and paternalism, by offering a multiperspectival approach regarding existence in the process of permanent becoming. His philosophy, which influenced the diverse schools of thought associated with the posthuman, provides a compelling framework to examine the ongoing transformation of the human condition in the context of technological evolution and philosophical, cultural, and aesthetic changes. In this context, the posthuman paradigm shift, which challenges anthropocentrism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution agendas, offers new perspectives for reinterpreting and reintegrating Nietzsche's philosophical thinking in the paradigm of contemporary discourses and concerns.

This collection originates from the International Conference on “Nietzsche, Critical Posthumanism, Transhumanism, and Metahumanism,” held on June 28–29, 2024, at the Department of Philosophy, Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. It features 14 carefully selected articles that adopt an open and critical stance on the subject, encouraging readers to reflect on the tensions and alignments between Nietzsche's philosophy and posthuman thought. Within this framework, the contributions from 14 scholars and intellectuals present fresh insights into how Nietzsche's ideas have influenced posthuman discourses, shaped new directions in thinking, and impacted the understanding of the posthuman condition. The volume is organized into three distinct sections: Part I, “Nietzsche, Technology, and Posthuman Aesthetics”; Part II, “Nietzsche, Sorgner, and Transhumanism”; and Part III, “Nietzsche, Euro-transhumanism, and Critical Posthumanism.”

Part I critically examines paternalistic and normative perspectives on concepts such as the good life, technology, art, and aesthetics. It approaches these topics through a non-dualistic, non-utilitarian and non-paternalistic lens, grounded in Nietzsche's ontology of permanent becoming, and a refined reinterpretation of his philosophy of power, will to power ontology, eternal recurrence, and aesthetic philosophy. It opens with Stefan Lorenz

Sorgner's article "Nietzsche, Dukkha, and Technology—Apology of a Refined Hedonism," which offers a non-utilitarian, non-Buddhist, and non-Nietzschean perspective on suffering as a response to the concept of Dukkha. Sorgner introduces the concept of "refined posthuman hedonism," grounded in the three pillars of *grandezza* (greatness), *raffinatezza* (refinement), and *fiduzia* (trust), as a framework for discovering a meaningful life. Suffering, a fundamental challenge of human existence, is often addressed within the realms of metaphysical beliefs, religious doctrines, ontological dualism, and utilitarian ethics. Transhumanist thinkers frequently turn to technology as a tool for mitigating suffering, advocating for classical or negative utilitarian ethics. However, Sorgner's Euro-transhumanist approach diverges from these traditions and approaches. Rejecting the concept of *naïve hedonism*, he proposes embracing suffering through a reinterpretation of Nietzschean principles such as *Amor fati*, power, and the eternal recurrence. His perspective remains non-utopian and avoids universal applicability, suggesting that suffering should be managed individually, in alignment with one's unique psychophysiological needs and demands. To support this view, Sorgner emphasizes the importance of political systems that should encourage an open perspective of interpretations of a good life, enabling individuals to adopt lifestyles that resonate with their specific needs. In Euro-transhumanist terms, he identifies six lifestyles i.e. "biotypes"—Berlin-style, Turin-style, Milan-style, Rome-style, Florence-style, and Naples-style—each characterized by distinct drives, emotions, and aspirations in their approach to suffering. As biotypes, these styles are permanently in the continuous process of becoming as "non-essentialist contingent nodal points" that occurs "during intense constructive interference" (Sorgner, 2022/2024, p. 390). Thus, art, aesthetics, philosophy, will to power, self-discipline, and self-mastery are key aspects in these lifestyles, resting on the unique psychophysiological ground of each person that dares to embrace an idiosyncratic existence. However, among these, Sorgner champions the Naples-style biotype, which lies at the heart of his refined posthuman hedonism. This lifestyle focuses on enduring pain and suffering as a path to achieving profound, meaningful moments in life, emphasizing the importance of forming trustworthy, meaningful relationships with like-minded individuals who share a commitment to greatness and refinement.

Remaining in the same realm of art, Yunus Tuncel's article "Artistic Power, Plasticity, and the Dionysian in Nietzsche and Posthuman Aesthetics" offers an in-depth analysis of the creative power that occupies a central position in Nietzsche's philosophy of power as well as in posthuman art. Nietzsche's philosophy of power is not reduced to or identical to his will to power ontology. Power is a rhizomatic and transversal entanglement of the feeling of power (artistic power, plastic power, political power, and so on) that shaped human culture, history, and existence. Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy emphasizes Dionysian ideals of ecstatic union with nature and symbolic expression, as well as plasticity, which reflects flexibility and cultural development. The convergence of the Dionysian with surrealist and abstract art is exemplified by Yunus through Kandinsky and Magritte's post-mimetic works that closely align with posthuman art. The author describes Nietzsche's concept of plasticity as a vital force for shaping human existence. It is the power that creates a dynamic balance between the historical, the unhistorical, and the suprahistorical, as it opens the myriads of processes regarding human self-transformation and cultural renewal. Moreover, these plastic forces act as a critical stance for the historical excess, and advocate for a balance of memory, forgetting, and creativity. The article brings a critical analysis regarding the reductive tendency in understanding the concept of power. It brings a new

interpretation regarding Nietzsche's will to power ontology and that of the notion of plastic power rooted in creative endeavors. It emphasizes the importance of weaving power with artistic expression, aligning with posthuman aesthetics. This is an important step considering that posthuman art and aesthetics rest on a fluid entanglement of technological advancements and inclusive power dynamics. In this paradigm, Nietzsche's insights bring innovative approaches to contemporary challenges, opening new perspectives of interpretation.

Aura Elena Schussler's article entitled "An Approach to Patricia Piccinini's Posthuman Artworks Through the Lens of a Weak Nietzscheanism" offers a reinterpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy and the concept of the overhuman in the realm of Patricia Piccinini's posthuman artworks. She approaches this analysis from a weak Nietzschean perspective and interpretation to emphasize the process of permanent becoming in the posthuman paradigm shift, where technology, art, and life are interwoven into a new unity of fluid, non-anthropocentric, and non-dualistic relationships. Central to this analysis is the Apollonian–Dionysian twist, which shapes Piccinini's more-than-human world, challenging ontological boundaries between human and animal, as well as natural and artificial realms. This world is populated by "animal-pomorphic" creatures, hybrids, monsters, and chimeras, celebrating the posthuman osmosis of the natural–artificial flow. These entities embody a symbiotic co-existence and co-evolution that align with the posthuman convergence. Schussler highlights Piccinini's notable works—such as "Sphinx" (2012), "The Field" (2018), "The Balance" (2019), and the *Between the Shadow and the Soul* exhibition (2020)—as representations of this posthuman aesthetic journey. Here, Apollonian and Dionysian forces reunite to breathe new dimensions into life through the unpredictable manifestation of aesthetic forces. Piccinini's installations "Alone With The Gods" (2016) and "Still Life with Stem Cells" (2002) explore the concept of the overhuman in the context of contemporary biotechnological advancements. In this context, the overhuman is reimaged within the framework of posthuman creativity, which Piccinini's installations associate with the challenges posed by emerging technologies. This creative force is expressed through the complex interconnections and entanglements at the heart of posthuman convergence, unveiling the limitless potential embedded in life itself.

A Nietzschean analysis of posthuman art through the lens of a non-dualist and non-anthropocentric paradigm is also approached by Philipp Wolf in "Nietzsche's Aesthetic Physiology of Art and Posthumanism." Wolf's interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetic physiology finds its convergence with posthuman art and aesthetics in many ways. First, he links this perspective to Nietzsche's idea of "power-quanta"—which feeds Nietzsche's will to power ontology—by emphasizing the dynamic and relational forces that shape the intricate entanglement between both organic and inorganic. Second, he sees artistic power and life as the generative forces that shape existence. In this paradigm, art and life are inseparable. Both mirror the process of permanent becoming that rests on autopoietic processes. In this respect, Nietzsche's aesthetic physiology deconstructs binary oppositions and speciesist essentialisms, an aspect that stands at the core of both critical posthumanism as well as metahumanism. His non-dualist ontology opens a fluid and rhizomatic world grounded on relational ontologies. At the core of these transformations, art becomes the medium where these relational dynamics of existence dissolve the human-centric discourses as well as the ego-centered consciousness. What results is a dynamic, co-constructed, and co-inhabited world where the "Dionysian ecstasy" brings a fluid and open life experience. This is an aesthetic experience where the human and the non-human, the natural and the

cultural, merge into the sensory-affective flows of life. This is a state that rests on mimetic and empathetic relationships opened up by the posthuman convergence, where different beings and the material world intertwine in a continuous flux of changes.

Part II explores a Nietzschean approach to transhumanism, presenting different perspectives on this topic. The authors draw their arguments from both classic transhumanist philosophies, such as those advocated by thinkers such as Nick Bostrom, and Euro-transhumanist perspectives, championed by Stefan Sorgner. It is a rich chapter that presents thought-provoking insights on various topics, such as human enhancement, artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR) technologies, emerging technologies, human dignity and autonomy. It provides a fresh analysis on present and future technologies and their impact on human evolution.

Nicolás Rojas-Cortés, in his article entitled “Overcoming the Transhuman Condition: is it Possible to Philosophically Enhance Transhumanism?” brings a critical analysis of the classic transhumanist agenda particularly as it is supported by Nick Bostrom’s theory of longtermism. The author’s criticism is oriented towards classic transhumanism, which, in his opinion, is philosophically incoherent in its’ seeking of an indefinite life extension, or immortality. His criticism is directed towards technological determinism—central to classic transhumanism, which relies heavily on physicalist and functionalist frameworks in areas such as cryogenics and mind-uploading—as well as towards the utopian vision of what constitutes a good life. In this paradigm, the problem of capitalist realism becomes relevant for the author. Adopting Mark Fisher’s perspective on this topic, the author warns that this philosophical incoherence of classic transhumanist agendas could lead to new challenges at both individual and societal levels. As a response to this concern, Rojas-Cortés advocates for a Euro-transhumanist approach supported by Sorgner. Sorgner’s approach is rooted in a Nietzschean and continental philosophy, rejecting the utopian ideals of classic transhumanism. It argues for a coherence between philosophical presuppositions and practical goals, alongside a democratic use of technology. In this framework, Rojas-Cortés supports the idea that transhumanism should consider relying on ethical and philosophical groundings to align its assumptions with its aspirations.

A further analysis of Nietzsche’s philosophical potential influence on transhumanism is explored by Marius Markuckas in his paper “Sorgner vs. Bostrom, or Nietzsche’s Philosophical Relevance to Transhumanism.” Markuckas takes a critical stance regarding both transhumanist philosophers Nick Bostrom and Stefan Sorgner on this topic. The author argues that both philosophers are simultaneously mistaken and correct in their interpretations regarding Nietzsche’s contribution to transhumanism. In his analysis, Markuckas revisits the philosophical debate initiated by Bostrom and Sorgner on this topic, wherein Bostrom argues that there is poor evidence of Nietzsche’s philosophical influence on transhumanist philosophy, in contrast to Sorgner’s position that supports the idea that there are structural analogies between Nietzsche’s thoughts and transhumanism. Central to Markuckas’s criticism is the concept of the “Übermensch.” His arguments emphasize that, contrary to the transhumanist agenda that relies on scientific and technological advancements, Nietzsche’s Übermensch is linked to existential and creative growth rooted in the process of permanent becoming, a position that aligns with Sorgner’s vision as well. This also marks a key point of contrast between Bostrom’s classic transhumanist philosophy—which tends toward a utopian stance regarding scientific and technological progress within a longtermist framework—and Sorgner’s Euro-transhumanism, which is grounded in a non-utopian ontology of permanent becoming. However, both approaches

are relevant to building a coherent understanding of transhumanism and its philosophical foundations.

According to Nick Bostrom, transhumanism draws its philosophical groundings from the Enlightenment tradition, emphasizing human autonomy, rationality, and progress as key elements for achieving a good life in the current paradigm of technological advancements. This perspective is critically examined by Juan Ignacio Jaña Villarroel in his article “The Case for Enhancement and the Enlightenment: Foucault, Sorgner, and Transhumanism.” Jaña Villarroel analyzes the philosophical tensions and convergences between Enlightenment ideals and classic transhumanist objectives regarding human enhancement. In this paradigm, the author reexamines the Kantian categorical imperative and arguments connected to dignity that, according to Kant, rest on rational autonomy and the capacity for self-governance. Jaña Villarroel identifies these ideas in classic transhumanism as well. For instance, Bostrom and Savulescu argue that enhancing human autonomy and cognitive abilities through biotechnological means could, in turn, elevate human dignity. In response to this perspective, the author draws into discussion Foucault’s genealogical critique and power relations philosophy, alongside Sorgner’s Euro-transhumanism, to propose a more nuanced approach towards enhancement. In doing so, he extends his approach with a Nietzschean interpretation of transhumanism. Within this framework, Sorgner’s concept of “fictive autonomy” became relevant, even if the author argues that this concept of fictive autonomy does not fully break away from the Kantian perspective, even though it adopts a more nuanced approach. However, his Euro-transhumanist analysis brings new challenges to classic transhumanism’s ethical and philosophical foundations regarding human enhancement, dignity, and autonomy.

Frédéric Balmont’s article “Our Nietzschean Free Riders” offers a fresh perspective on the philosophical tensions among Nietzsche’s philosophy, transhumanism, Nietzschean anti-transhumanists, and transhumanists who embrace Nietzsche (Sorgner). Balmont’s critique illuminates these complexities by targeting both supporters and opponents of both Nietzsche and transhumanism, including Arnaud Sorosina and Jean-Michel Besnier. His goal is to show how both Sorosina (a fervent Nietzschean) and Besnier fail in their attempt to oppose transhumanism on philosophical and metaphysical grounds. Balmont takes issue with Sorosina’s perceived narrow view of transhumanism, criticizing his reductionist approach that frames it as mere techno-optimism driven by hedonism and the pursuit of unlimited life extension. In contrast, Besnier’s critique can be seen as less extreme, as he acknowledges the potential benefits of advanced medical technologies proposed by transhumanist agendas. However, Balmont emphasizes Besnier’s observation linking transhumanism to nihilism and technological alienation, arguing that transhumanism’s reliance on technological advancements risks eroding human symbolic depth. With these directions in mind, Balmont seeks a pragmatic approach to these philosophical tensions. He advises transhumanists who dismiss Nietzsche to allow Nietzscheans to contribute to and enhance the field of transhumanism. Furthermore, he believes that Nietzscheans, while criticizing transhumanist agendas and ideologies, do not stay away from adopting transhumanist advancements selectively, earning the label of “free riders.” In addition, Balmont cautions transhumanists who admire Nietzsche to exercise greater care when placing Nietzsche’s philosophy at the forefront of transhumanism.

In his article entitled “Unveiling Infinity: AI Simulations and Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence,” Damian Mingle analyzes the convergence between Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of “eternal recurrence,” VR, and AI simulation technologies that could mimic

eternal recurrence. He tries to integrate the Nietzschean eternal recurrence into current discussions and practical research regarding VR and AI simulation technologies. According to Mingle, Nietzsche's concept may find its relevance in current debates regarding human identity, free will, and autonomy, as well as the experience of time and space in VR. By exploring these intriguing debates, he identifies many philosophical, ethical, practical, and existential concerns. One of these philosophical concerns refers to the simulation of this eternal recurrence in VR. Moreover, Mingle's exploration considers the risks, benefits, and ethical issues of using these AI technologies in different domains. He takes as examples AI simulations in ecological modeling, education, urban planning, and therapeutic practices. For instance, AI-driven VR therapy for PTSD may help many persons in such situations to overcome their traumatic experiences. This approach implies not only Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence but also psychological concerns. That's why Mingle advocates for an interdisciplinary integration of cognitive science, philosophical, ethical, and psychological insights regarding VR and AI-driven simulations. However, he underscores the crucial role of philosophers in offering fresh perspectives on human existence within the context of technological advancement.

Part III delves into the interplay between Nietzsche's philosophy, Euro-transhumanism, and critical posthumanism. It provides innovative perspectives on topics that connect Nietzsche's legacy to areas such as education, ecology, agency, subjectivity, creativity, AI, and the posthuman condition. The authors aim to reintroduce and adapt Nietzsche's ideas within contemporary debates on the digital revolution, environmental challenges, posthuman life, and the evolving role of AI in contemporary digital culture and human existence.

In her article "Becoming More Than Who You Are: Euro-transhumanism, Nietzsche, and Education in the Age of Digitization and Automation," Tamara Kamatović examines the convergence of Euro-transhumanism and Nietzsche's concept of "Bildung" within the context of the digital revolution and its impact on education. Kamatović criticizes traditional education rooted in Enlightenment ideals. She proposes rather a flexible and dynamic understanding of education in its purpose, nature, and processes. Moreover, she raises the ethical concerns that result from education digitization, encouraging an appropriate balance between traditional teaching techniques and technological tools. In this paradigm, she integrates Euro-transhumanism's perspectives on self-transformation and the ethical development of new educational techniques that advocate for a feasible integration of emerging technologies into educational practices. Her approach relies on Nietzsche's idea of self-discipline (as *Bildung*), which prioritizes individual growth and self-refinement. In this context, the concepts of *otium* (as the cultivation of fine tastes through self-discipline) and *leisure* (as hedonist relaxation), in a contemporary context, become relevant. The author proposes a balanced recalibration of these to support and enhance educational objectives. In this context, Euro-transhumanism, which closely aligns with Nietzsche's vision of self-driven learning and self-overcoming, offers a compelling framework for reimagining education in the digital age—that empowers individuals to shape their growth while embracing the transformative possibilities of technology.

The Anthropocene era presents numerous challenges at both the human and planetary levels. Andrei Nutas's paper entitled "Euro-transhumanism and the Ecological Übermensch" analyzes the philosophical and practical connections between Nietzsche's concept of the Übermensch, Euro-transhumanism, technology, and environmental ethics. The article seeks to propose an open and symbiotic co-evolution and co-existence among

humanity, nature, culture, and technology. Nutas presents contrasting perspectives between classic transhumanism and Euro-transhumanism concerning Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch*, the environment, and technological advancements. While classic transhumanism supports an individualistic approach to technological progress and human enhancement within the framework of the *Übermensch*, Euro-transhumanism is rooted in a non-individualistic interpretation of the concept. In this context, the author introduces the idea of the "ecological *Übermensch*" within the Euro-transhumanist paradigm to highlight the interconnection between humans and nature, prioritizing ecological embeddedness and social and ecological responsibility. Nutas proposes a new environmental ethic centered on the notion of the ecological *Übermensch*, which advocates for sustainable technologies that unite humanity and the planet, fostering ecocentric values to challenge existing anthropocentric biases. This approach seeks to align human flourishing with both technological innovation and planetary health, emphasizing an open relationality grounded in a redefined "ecological self" that extends individuality to encompass interconnectedness with the natural world. Within this framework, the reintegration of traditional indigenous values related to human psychological well-being and planetary health paves the way for a dynamic ecopsychology rooted in nature-based therapies. The article emphasizes the Euro-transhumanist life-affirming philosophy that reinterprets Nietzsche's philosophy to promote a sustainable, inclusive, and open relationality in a more-than-human world.

In the following article entitled "Nietzschean Hyperagents," David Roden presents his speculative posthumanism philosophy applied to Stefan Sorgner's Nietzschean transhumanism and Gilles Deleuze's reinterpretation of Nietzsche's philosophical ideas. Roden's philosophical project is to develop a "posthumanist ethics informed by an immanent process ontology." The author brings a critical analysis to classic transhumanist philosophy that advocates for human enhancement in an anthropocentric framework through the application of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive science. In this paradigm, Roden relies on an immanent process ontology theory that rejects transhumanism's human-centric perspective. By introducing the concept of "unbounded speculative posthumanism," the author questions both human subjectivity and agency in the posthuman transition. "Subtractive xenophilia," according to him, may be a new possibility for the posthuman condition, as it rests on what he calls "biomorphs"—a concept that opens the fluidity and multiplicity of posthuman realities that may go beyond conventional understandings of embodiment and subjectivity. Furthermore, the core discussion involves the transition from "plastic" human agents to "hyperagents"—new entities that will have the possibility of self-modification. However, due to the lack of a stable ontology, folk-psychological capacities, fixed forms, and maybe rationality, these hypothetical entities will also short-circuit traditional notions of identity and agency, opening new possibilities for understanding and speculating on the open-ended posthuman future.

Next, Sifatun Noor follows a critical approach regarding a philosophical convergence of Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* and AI, in the article "Locating the Connection Between Nietzsche's Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence through the Case Study of *Black Mirror*." The research examines the challenges AI poses to human identity, autonomy, and self-overcoming, using two episodes of the TV series *Black Mirror*, namely "Be Right Back" and "White Christmas," as case studies. The author presents philosophical and ethical arguments to demonstrate how AI challenges Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* by

short-circuiting human uniqueness and agency. This occurs through the creation of technological dependencies that conflict with Nietzsche's ideals of the will to power, creativity, and life-affirming thought encapsulated in *Amor fati*. The author's ethical concerns resulting from the analysis of the two episodes of *Black Mirror* rest on the moral implications of using AI technologies to replicate human consciousness. Such scenarios that appear in both "Be Right Back" and "White Christmas" reveal the ontological and existential limitations of such technologies in fostering human growth and self-overcoming. Furthermore, reducing human consciousness to functionalist and instrumentalist interpretations, as depicted in the episodes, challenges human agency and autonomy, which, according to Noor, demands deeper philosophical and ethical reflection to avoid reducing life and existence to a meaningless, mechanical, and superficial framework.

Nietzsche's frequent use of aphorism in his writings has earned him the label of a "poet-philosopher." Antonis Sarris, in "Nietzsche's Aphoristic Discourse as a Posthuman Enunciation," brings a new insight on this topic. He ties Nietzsche's aphoristic writing to posthumanist and transhumanist discourses. According to Sarris, Nietzsche's philosophy opened up a paradigm shift at the core of language and the human condition that finds its grounding in the posthuman enunciation. Sarris's analysis focuses on Nietzsche's writings that contain aphorisms—a particular type of writing and expressing of philosophical ideas that relies on concise and fragmented statements. This approach blends literature and philosophy, creating a method that is both systematic and multiperspectival in interpretation. It bridges linear argumentation with metaphorical expression, influencing the development of postmodern philosophy and literature. Additionally, Nietzsche's aphoristic writing critiques traditional philosophical methods and forms. According to Sarris, Nietzsche's aphorisms also encapsulate his concept of "eternal recurrence," emphasizing the interplay of repetition and difference. Moreover, the author brings a critical analysis of Nietzsche's aphoristic style and contemporary digital culture that embodies tweets and memes. In this framework, the tension between AI and aphorisms reveals the porosity and fluidity of the posthuman paradigm shift.

The editor and contributors aim for this book to be a significant addition to the ongoing discourses and debates surrounding Nietzsche's relevance to the posthuman paradigm shift. This volume serves as a valuable resource, exploring topics such as Nietzsche's impact on classic and Euro-transhumanism, critical posthumanism, ethical considerations of technological enhancement, posthuman aesthetics and education, reimagined posthuman hedonism, robots and AI simulations, and the critique of anthropocentrism in ecological contexts. It is intended to engage scholars, students, and readers interested in exploring humanity's future through the lenses of Nietzschean and posthuman philosophy.

References

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