

# THE PROBLEMATIC COHERENCE OF A NIETZSCHEAN TRANSHUMANISM

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## **Abstract**

What this paper attempts, first of all, is to investigate the axiological disparity, perhaps even contradiction, between Nietzschean and transhumanist thought. A disparity that is already insinuated as soon as we confront the most habitual transhumanist discourse and the Nietzschean declarations on the conditions of possibility of the self-overcoming of the human into the overhuman. One of the authors whose reflections have undoubtedly remained as references of this transhumanism has clearly recognized that he would see his position “as a conservative extension of traditional ethics” (Bostrom, 2008, p. 6). We could even say that transhumanism itself, in one of its most representative variants, would find its opportunity and philosophical justification, even its ultimate meaning, in the attempt to accommodate the spectacular advances of technologies within the framework of these traditional moral values. This work would also intend, and we say it in the second place so that it serves as a touchstone or testing ground for the previous objective, to draw a brief outline, so as to contrast them, of the respective attitudes of Nietzsche and transhumanism before our mortal condition, before the finiteness that constitutes the human being in front of the “immortal gods” relentlessly engendered by our imagination and our desire.

## **Keywords**

Values, posthuman, Overhuman, death, education

We will maintain that in the case of Nietzschean thought, human reconciliation with one's own and others' death, and with the inevitable suffering of life, is an essential component of the self-overcoming of the human into the *overhuman*. For the human attitude, in the pejorative sense of too human, would in general have been one of resentment and desire for revenge against time and the becoming that takes everything away from it, and ultimately against earthly existence. But in the case of

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transhumanism, even if we consider the arguments used by Sorgner (2016, pp. 10–11; 2016/2020, p. 2; 2017c, pp. 251–254) to not take seriously some of its most exaggerated statements on this matter of immortality, we find numerous traces of the wishful conviction that there would be nothing really necessary in that stance of reconciliation with mortality, which is generally accepted nowadays. But whoever says mortality says aging, and of course also suffering in general.

## 1. Initial Disparities

Undoubtedly, as has so often been emphasized, the point from which we must start to attempt a certain philosophical compatibility between the thought of Nietzsche and current transhumanism, is to show the parallelism of the human-transhuman-posthuman line, on the one hand, with the last man-higher/man-overhuman, on the other. In polemic with Habermas over the problematic morality of liberal eugenics, Sorgner (2017a, p. 19; 2017b, pp. 43–49) would have justified this parallelism by alluding to the alleged “structural analogy” between education in the classical sense and genetic enhancement. In his opinion, for Nietzsche the task of producing overhumans would be an essentially educational task. But if we look at this very important issue of education, without delving into the discussion of the precise meaning that transhumanists give to the word, although “it is worth asking what Sorgner means by ‘education’” (Babich, 2017, p. 113), we will see that the analogy of the educational process with genetic engineering, as it appears explicitly in Sorgner’s text, does not consist but in the fact that in both cases it would be the parents’ decision that would condition for the future both the physical constitution and the character of their descendants, leaving also aside now the question of the problematic reversibility of eugenic modifications.

However, if we turn to the Nietzschean work, we will be persuaded that this minimal concept of the educational process as conditioned by the decisions of the parents has little or nothing to do with the requirements of the cultural generation of overhumans in the sense of the German philosopher. Because in this it is necessary to assume the experimental task of the transvaluation (*Umwertung*) of all the values that have been guiding the different historical developments of Western culture, although sometimes Nietzsche even seems to refer to practically all the civilizations of planet Earth, which would not in vain be “the ascetic planet” (Nietzsche, 2007, p. 85). It should be borne in mind that the Nietzschean free spirit is one who has detached him or herself, or let loose (*auflösen*) from all those educators by virtue of whose influence he or she had grown culturally, and whose example he or she would even have loved. It is therefore at least doubtful that your parents can educate you as a *higher man* in the Nietzschean sense, and even less so as overhuman. Rather, you are forced to free yourself from your most beloved society, even though this process of liberation does not exclude the influence of some philosopher-midwife. Or perhaps not even this, because the very title *Schopenhauer as Educator* will be revealed to the German thinker, at the end of his career, as actually hiding, so to speak, Nietzsche educating himself, giving birth to himself, on the way to becoming what he is. The free spirit is the herald of the philosopher of the future, who will have the exalted mission of determining the why and wherefore of the human kind in the self-

overcoming of the human into the overhuman. With this pointing out of a common goal for humanity, which is that of the overhuman as the sense of the Earth, the coming into existence of the human race as such would take place properly for the first time.

We are going to use some of Bostrom's works above all because they contain a type of transhumanism which, in my opinion, reaches the category of "normalized," if we may put it that way. Because naturally there would be different types of transhumanism. Hard transhumanism is distinguished by considering genetic enhancement as an enforceable moral duty (Savulescu, 2001; Savulescu & Kahane, 2009). Or also by showing great interest in the enormous possibilities that the famous mind uploading, or mind transfer, is supposed to open up for us. But it is understandable that a Nietzschean transhumanism such as Sorgner's has to be skeptical of these extremist versions, recognizing in short what cannot be overlooked if we want to make viable the variant it defends, that is, that the Nietzschean concept of the overhuman cannot be made compatible with all the transhumanist concepts of the posthuman. Because recognizing this is the only possibility he has to convincingly affirm that this concept of the overhuman proper to Nietzsche would indeed share many fundamental anthropological and ethical positions with the transhumanists (Sorgner, 2016, p. 134; 2016/2020, p. 65). So, we finally come to the nuanced thesis that some transhumanist versions of the posthuman would coincide in some way with Nietzsche's overhuman.

We should add, in order to be able to affirm this nuanced thesis, that it is not only necessary to keep the soft versions of transhumanism but also, or even mainly, the "soft" or weak readings of Nietzschean work, as those that take their lead from Vattimo's highly influential one. Sorgner (2017c, p. 248) readily admits that his would in any case be a soft or weak Nietzscheanism, arguing its desirability on the basis of the philosopher's own perspectivism. Besides focusing on the issue of the overhuman, this soft Nietzscheanism would underline above all what scholars like Abel (2001/2015) have called the German philosopher's "adualism," and also his adhesion to the spirit of the natural sciences of his time. However, in this sense we must point out that Nietzsche's perspectivism roundly rejected a mechanicalistic interpretation of physics as an ascetic ontological position which still deified *truth* (Nietzsche, 2007, pp. 113–114), while he unreservedly celebrated the enormous progress represented by hard sciences as far as methodical procedure is concerned. In any case, Sorgner's is a philosophy consciously proposed to us as doubly soft, both in terms of its transhumanism and of its reading of Nietzschean thought.

But there is still more to say in this opening section. Sorgner (2016, p. 142; 2016/2020, p. 74) also presents us very well with the fundamental or essential characteristic of all transhumanisms, which would render them coherent enough to be considered a cultural and philosophical movement in our days, even a way of life. All of them share the affirmation of the usefulness of technologies for the increase of the probability of the birth of the posthuman (Sorgner, 2016/2020, p. 34). But there is no description of the posthuman with a content that is shared by all transhumanists: they only agree to conceive it as a further development of the human. Because from our current limited human position, it is to be expected that there

would be many aspects of posthumanity that we simply cannot understand, just as a monkey is barred from mental access to many dimensions of human life. What I want to underline is that practically all transhumanists would be on Bostrom's side in defending the rational desirability of those cognitive and emotional enhancements and of the expansion of healthspan, which can be fostered exclusively by the use of technologies.

As some of those interested in the debate on Nietzschean thought and transhumanism have acknowledged, the idea of going beyond the human through technologies, which is central to all transhumanists, is what at first glance is completely alien to Nietzsche. Partly because of this Bostrom (2005, pp. 4–5) said that the Nietzschean overhuman must be considered only as a superficial antecedent of transhumanism. Confronting this with the argument that this lack of reference to technology in Nietzsche is only an effect of his time, because if the philosopher had lived in ours, he would no doubt have been a supporter of transhumanism, has the air of begging the question and that is why we do not trust its real value in the debate. Not only because there were many earlier authors who promoted imagining the delights of the technological future, but above all because it is clear that Zarathustra's invocations of the overhuman would be carried out without exception as a call to the will of the higher men, as an attempt to awaken their sleepy force of will. Nietzschean self-overcoming seems to be a matter of ethical effort and not of techno-scientific intervention passively received by the subject. We might even think that, if access to the posthuman is really exclusively technological, this will invalidate the entire Nietzschean discourse of the overhuman because it appeals to the strength of our will. However, transhumanism could also be required to have a healthy ethical disposition open to progress. That is to say, it does not have to consider the moral problem closed by appealing to altruism as absolute morality (Bamford, 2017, p. 217) and therefore, in order to conclude this work, it will be necessary to make an important correction in favor of Sorgner's theses.

## 2. The Respective Values

As we pointed out, the self-overcoming of the human into the overhuman is in Nietzsche conditioned in its possibility by the change of the value of values. It is necessary to reverse the ascetic or nihilistic values that have led to the spiritual collapse of our world, manifested as the event of God's death (Nietzsche 2001, pp. 119–120; 199). It happens then that supreme values are no longer valid; they are incapable of giving direction to human existence. The Nietzschean transvaluation would be a cultural experiment that seeks to make us capable of supporting and assimilating *the thought* of the *eternal return*, whose master is Zarathustra. The thought is a revolution in our cultural way of living the time of life, especially in the ethical sense that it settles us in the absolute impossibility of justifying the present moment by appealing to a future result that would be desirable because it would compensate our painful efforts to free us from the present misery, but also in the impossibility of redeeming the tremendous suffering of human history. The thought of the eternal return, with the transvaluation required to assimilate it, is the true rupture of the teleological structure in which human life would necessarily have been structured for

millennia. The lack of meaning or purpose of the human will have to be overcome, then, by the creation of new, immanent values that give the present moment, while it returns, and while that return is wanted, the value of eternity. Of course, it would be the eternity of instant repetition. The change in the value of values should not be understood as the mere subversion of the values that have hitherto dominated the West, but rather as the discovery that *good* and *evil* would be inextricably linked, intertwined, in such a way that to a certain extent *good* itself would depend on what we consider *evil*. There is no room for a human life purged of the negative aspect of suffering, but neither would it be desirable, because a life purified of suffering would mean saying goodbye to pleasure and joy. Eternal life in the usual sense of religions, heaven, is for Nietzsche simply nothingness.

According to the opinion of Bostrom (2003, p. 3), the values of transhumanism would be grouped around a central value, which is the exploration of the posthuman realm, however much that realm exceeds our possibilities of full comprehension. At first glance, this central value seems compatible with the Nietzschean effort to present us in his texts with the set of ethical characteristics that would distinguish his figure of the overhuman. But this initial impression will be discarded as soon as we look at the appendix to Bostrom's paper on the history of transhumanism, entitled *The Transhumanist Declaration* (Bostrom, 2005, p. 26). And the fact is that number 7 of this important declaration affirms that the transhumanists distinguish themselves morally by defending the well-being of all human beings, animals and robots. The entire tradition of Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism is thus brought back into line with the more general and traditional orientation of Western morality, although it does of course introduce interesting nuances. In the sense, which Nietzsche contested over and over again, of supposing that there is absolutely no problem of morality because the principle that was fundamental for Schopenhauer would be indisputable: "harm no one and help everyone" (Nietzsche, 2002, p. 76). Morality in itself is considered absolute, valid for all times and cultures, it is of course altruistic morality or the morality of compassion, and furthermore it is assumed that every rational being has knowledge of good and evil in this unique sense. The problem that would remain for the philosophers of morality, those of the past and those of today, is to rationally base the supreme value of altruism on the belief that there would be objective reasons for moral action. It is true that another value of the ethical tradition that Bostrom represents is that of being open to criticism and debate, but the principle of valuing universal well-being or the well-being of the greatest number over any other consideration is expected to be beyond dispute.

The case of the prominent transhumanist David Pearce, defender of negative utilitarianism, is very useful for our argument. This author begins his manifesto, entitled *The Hedonistic Imperative*, with a few words that we do not resist quoting for their symptomatic clarity: "The Hedonistic Imperative outlines how genetic engineering and nanotechnology will abolish suffering in all sentient life. The abolitionist project is hugely ambitious but technically feasible" (Pearce, 2015, para. 254).

The moral demand to reduce or even abolish the pain and discomfort of all sentient beings is based on the conviction that suffering would no longer be biologically necessary:

The metabolic pathways of pain and malaise evolved because they served the fitness of our genes in the ancestral environment. They will be replaced by a different sort of neural architecture—a motivational system based on heritable gradients of bliss. States of sublime well-being are destined to become the genetically pre-programmed norm of mental health. (Pearce, 2015, para. 258)

It is plausible that the very core of transhumanist moral values is formed by this imperative of negative hedonism that the co-founder of *Humanity+* explains here with perspicuous clarity. And it is easy to conclude that in his manifesto there are indeed resounding Schopenhauerian echoes. This is not an isolated case, but we find very similar statements in other well-known transhumanists, like Max More. Even though More cautiously nuances the fact that no matter how much technology frees us from human misery, it does not mean that the transhumanists aspire to a life free from risk, danger and struggle (More, 2013, p. 4), this admission is truly strange when one simultaneously posits the elimination of suffering as a goal.

This forceful declaration of war on suffering, which we could almost say constitutes transhumanism in its ethical aspect, is based on the awareness of the supposed gratuitousness of it, which would be revealed to us by technological advances that allegedly bring the possibility of “designing paradise.” But all this would certainly be very bad according to the spirit of the Nietzschean work, to the extent that it is largely characterized by its tragic pessimism or pessimism of force (Nietzsche, 2001, pp. 234–236). In the face of Schopenhauer and Wagner’s romantic pessimism, and against it, Nietzsche will promote what he calls Dionysian pessimism. Its basic negative trait would be the rebuttal of Epicurean-Christian hedonism, since it is precisely related to the romantic attitude, for both of them would have arisen naturally from the same decadence in a deep or physiological sense. Nietzsche denounces the vitally and culturally catastrophic effects of not being able to withstand pain, no matter how minor. This almost unbeatable argument against the fundamental or philosophical viability of a Nietzschean transhumanism, which we can call the argument of suffering, is lucidly highlighted in Tuncel’s critical work (2017, p. 227). It is clear that the ethical effort for the overhuman it is not at all a question of eliminating suffering but on the contrary of affirming it tragically, affirming it together with the joy with which it alternates, in the form of *amor fati*. Pleasure and pain are inseparable, and the strength of an individual is tested in his ability to approve of even the most terrible and enigmatic aspects of existence. Because it is not possible to banish the terrible, the enigmatic from life. It is not possible but neither is it desirable, not even by means of technology, we should add. Otherwise, if it were possible and we wanted to do so, we would immediately be entering pure and hard nothingness. The Nietzschean world of the will to power, a quantitative world, demands the qualitative contrast of pleasure and pain as criteria

for increasing and decreasing strength, because without these phenomenological qualities the will to power would not even be conceivable.

So, we can conclude by affirming that the values of transhumanism, at least insofar as they are based on this deep negative hedonism, have not gone through the transvaluation that Nietzsche encourages in his work. If we look at them from a Nietzschean point of view, it should therefore be said that transhuman values still are negative and reactive values in which an attitude of resentment against human life and its tragic substance manifests itself. To be honest, that would not be at all strange, because these values of resentment, in Nietzsche's opinion, are the dominant values in our culture. And we have already seen how, for Bostrom, transhumanist utilitarianism wants to confirm these dominant values in order to integrate technological progress into their bosom. Adopting the fundamental Nietzschean imperative of fidelity to the sense of the Earth entails subverting the desire for revenge into love of destiny, that is, to eliminate resentment against life as it is, with its pains and sufferings. It is a question of neutralizing the desire to always be in another place, of fleeing from this world to any place, as long as it is away from the world, as Baudelaire read by Nietzsche famously said. And one might think that we have put technologies at the service of this profound ascetic yearning of ours to always be in another place.

That is why Babich thinks that transhumanism would be a "too human" dream, actually our usual dream. Sloterdijk's anthropotechnics is not about becoming what you are, but the one you want to or should be.

We want to be anything but human. We want, as Günther Anders already argued in his 1956 *The Obsolescence of Humanity*, to overcome our 'promethean shame' and to be like our precisely manufactured objects in all their precision, all their durability, all their replaceability. We wish to be objects with exchangeable parts, infinitely upgradable, as science fiction robots stories have long explored these possibilities. (Babich, 2017, p. 122)

This desire to be an object, which the emerging technologies are likely to realize, would express, from Babich's point of view, the old ascetic ideal so familiar to Nietzsche, the desire to be in a completely different place from where we live. A place, of course, where nothing can hurt us. Let us remember that this feeling of being absolutely sure that nothing can happen to oneself was for Wittgenstein (1965) an essential component of the religious experience. But it is a place that is undoubtedly a non-place, the nothingness that ascetics have always wanted, because it is already known that man prefers wanting nothingness to not wanting at all (Nietzsche, 2007, pp. 68, 120). The limit of that ascetic desire, logically, is none other than immortality.

However, Sorgner will again draw our attention to important coincidences between the respective values of Nietzschean thought and transhumanism. For example, individualism and individual freedom, which in the case of transhumanism refer especially to the use of technologies. But at this point the situation is complicated in an interesting way, because there are transhumanists, such as

Bostrom, who coincide with Nietzsche when they come to imagining the posthuman aspect under the model of the classic perfection of the Renaissance man, while Sorgner consciously distances himself from both by defending the plurality of goods and the value of negative freedom and also of a concept of a purely formal good. Along the same lines, Sorgner would be in favour of an absolute nihilism, both alethic and ethical, with which he will obviously oppose the more strictly Nietzschean position (Sorgner, 2017, p. 255). In any case, he assumes a weak Nietzscheanism, which is easier to integrate into the framework of a liberal and democratic society such as ours.

### **3. Wishing for Immortality**

It is very important for the general objective of this work not to overlook the central place that has been occupied by the topic of mind uploading, or mind transfer, in the futuristic imagination of many transhumanists, especially those of the most extremist persuasion. An almost strategic centrality that would undoubtedly have served as a cover letter for the most popular transhumanism. Already in the eighties of the last century, Marvin Minsky himself, on the occasion of receiving the gold medal for science from the Generalitat de Catalunya, was able to transmit his enthusiasm to the journalists in a press conference held in Barcelona, when he spoke to them about the spectacular possibilities that would be offered to us in the course of not many years by technology capable of recording the digitalized states of the brain of our dying grandfather in a computer disk: nothing less than reliving him at will and having conversations with him as if he were virtually alive. Bostrom (2008, p. 20, note 41) will also insist very disguisedly on encouraging this enthusiasm when he merely suggests that humanity's deepest yearning in all its cultural diversities, that of the conquest of endless life, that of a supernatural posthuman existence, that golden dream of ours of the elixir of life, could perhaps be realized by ageing arrestment technology, or, of course, by digital immortality technology. It must be acknowledged that Sorgner (2016, p. 10; 2016/2020, p. 2) began his far-sighted essay on transhumanism by undoing the very coherence of the concept of personal immortality taken literally. We do not need much effort to become aware of its radical impossibility. Immortality is not a "realistic option" under any circumstances, and we will realize this for example if we take into account the certain or probable expiration of the solar system or even the universe (Sorgner, 2017c, pp. 251–252). Now, if both things are true, that is, that immortality as such is unfeasible, and therefore does not deserve to be taken seriously in a literal sense; but that at the same time "the most prominent variants [of transhumanism] at this point share hope in a future based on the siliceous, future that could perhaps be realized by mind uploading" (Sorgner, 2016, p. 142; 2016/2020, p. 74), then we have no other choice but to declare immortality a classic utopia that is only valid insofar as it symbolizes something perfectly real and viable. That is to say, in our time the relatively well-founded hope of an unsuspected chronological extension of the healthspan. But this sensible and well-thought-out solution fails to conceal the frenzy of hope for "immortality," however relative or restricted. The hope, in short, that the posthuman could emerge one not too distant day as a person run on the computer (Sorgner, 2016, p. 143;

2016/2020, p. 75). That is to say, relative immortality would lose much of its sensible utopian status if we bring our too human hope to the possibilities of digital immortality. Proof of this would be the sums of money that are apparently being invested in research into the technology of so-called mental transfer. What began as science fiction in the form of the computational metaphor of the mind in such common thought experiments, for example, in the field of the philosophy of personal identity (Parfit, 1984), would now have earned a very real practical dedication in futuristic universities and research institutes.

There is no doubt that digital immortality has gone from being a mere imaginable possibility in the field of fiction to being considered as a real possibility merely by the hand of computational functionalism, and to that extent its plausibility depends entirely on the declining force of conviction of this paradigm of cognitive sciences. This must be acknowledged by the most serious transhumanists, such as Bostrom and Sorgner. But it so happens that today computational functionalism finds scientific and philosophical challenges of great importance that would denounce its poorly hidden dualism, which opens an abyss between software and hardware when it comes to characterizing essentially what an object having a mind entails, thus disembodied our human condition to extremes truly comparable to those of the most ascetic religions. I think there will be many who warmly celebrate this radical digital disincarnation as a sublime achievement of the most spiritual culture, the algorithms as a true techno-scientific confirmation of the most ancient monotheistic traditions. But it is possible that their moment has passed. Because we cannot lose sight of the strongly critical meaning of the enactive approach to perception developed above all by Noë (2004), for the whole issue of digital immortality as dependent on psychological computationalism. We would not be our brains, but, on the contrary, we would be installed in existence as whole animals. What we call the mind itself consists of a sort of brain-body-world dance (Noë, 2009). The idea of a personal immortality made digitally on the computer, or, more disembodiedly if possible, in the cloud, would have absolutely nothing to do with the actual conscious life of human animals, simply because we are not at all brains that are nourished by juices in the bucket to which our body would be reduced. Rather, mentality takes place only in the dependent co-origination of subject and world (Varela, et al, 1991), more concretely by virtue of our implicit and practical knowledge of sensorimotor contingencies (Noë, 2004). But this means that in order to be what we are, we cannot do without our corporality at all, as the functionalist confinement of our mind in algorithmically regulated computational states advocates. That is why it is necessary to correct, in accordance with what has been said so far, Sorgner's defensive statement (2016, pp. 76–77; 2016/2020, pp. 37–38), in which he tries to make mind uploading compatible with the naturalistic rejection of traditional anthropological dualism, which in his opinion would be the rule in all transhumanists. It is true that we would not be faced with a substantial or strong dualism that has to resort to any type of supernaturalism, but we would be faced with a weak or property-based one that reduces human psychology to computational or functional states on a purely logical and abstract level, to absolutely disembodied states. While being careful to

respect, at least in words, the minimum requirement of materialism implied by the concept of supervenience.

The mere idea of digital immortality, even taken only in a symbolic sense, as a utopia, will not fail to express, from a Nietzschean perspective, the longing for a life without a body, and therefore without all the annoying realities that the body includes, such as pain, suffering, aging and ultimately death (although the body also gives us, of course, the joys of health, of falling in love, of youthful power). It is the Nietzschean viewpoint to value genealogically this profound human yearning, that is, to identify it as the reappearance of the traditional ascetic ideal of most terrestrial cultures. Here again, the difference is evident with the way in which transhumanist philosophers work, as they refrain from valuing the desires that would be expressed in the technological developments that excite them.

The fact that aging is classified as an illness, that is, that people wake up to the hope that old age is something that can be cured, a hope so characteristic of transhumanism, contradicts in reality the Nietzschean interpretation of the will to power at its organic and anthropological level. Because the world of Nietzsche is that of increasing and decreasing forces in conflict, the Dionysian world of creation and destruction. The symbol that the god Dionysus represents allows us to conceive “immortality” only by the way of fertility and sexual reproduction. The religious moral of Greek tragedy was that, beneath the inevitable death and destruction of today’s characters, life continued indestructible and silent in the next generations of human beings. The delirium of the literal immortality of old men cured of their diseases radically excludes Dionysian wisdom because it would eliminate the “immortality” represented by the successive births of new human beings. The goal of turning old age into a curable disease is a blatant injustice against the new generations of human beings. The venerable philosopher who echoed the tragic or Dionysian vision of the world, Heraclitus of Ephesus, left it written in one of the fragments that have reached us that “yet Hades and Dionysus are the same” (Kranz & Diels, 1975, p. 155). In other words, despite all appearances against it, the god of death and the god of life are the same god. Just as pain and suffering cannot be separated from pleasure and joy without destroying them immediately, so life cannot be separated from death without at that very moment ceasing to be life. This profound and so ancient idea is the one that beats in Zarathustra’s speeches against the preachers of death, and in favor of the one who knows how to die in time and makes of his free death a feast: this is just the opposite of a preacher of death, or of eternal life, which for Nietzsche would be the same thing.

We know that Nietzsche would come to see his thought as the transposition into a philosophical pathos of the Dionysian phenomenon that he claimed to have discovered in his time: as a philosopher, he would be nothing more than a true disciple of Dionysus and his ancestral wisdom (Nietzsche, 2005, pp. 208, 229). But the tragic intuition of life is not exclusively Nietzschean. In Western culture there have been different attitudes towards death, of which Ariès (1977) informs us splendidly. After the massacres of the Great War, for example, we noticed the need to transform our civilized attitude towards death, which until then was one of denied or concealed death. The founder of Psychoanalysis went so far as to promote the

motto *si vis vitam para mortem* (Freud 1974, p. 60). Death must be given entry and consideration in our life because otherwise it is degraded to an insipid and superficial game. The Nietzschean motto in this regard was to live dangerously, which is at odds with the cultural climate of our postmodernity, and undoubtedly also with the one that dominates in transhumanism. However, nowadays it seems that reconciliation with death would finally have been imposed as the conventionally civilized attitude. The assumption, in short, that mortality is our natural condition, as it is of everything that lives, because life is a terminal illness. In a word, the acceptance of the inevitability of our finitude. Well then, faced with it, and this is important to underline as a symptom, Bostrom himself had come to affirm that “even if one believed (erroneously in my view) that mortality or aging were somehow essential features of the persons we are... .” (Bostrom, 2008, p. 15, note 34). Transhumanism is then presented to us, according to this, as an enlightened and “scientific” expression, and no longer as mere mythological or religious reverie, of the human desire for immortality. But the overhuman of Nietzsche is by no means the one who has conquered immortality, but the one who has definitively said farewell to the too-human delirium of living indefinitely, which has nothing to do with the repetition of the instant in circular time. And there are reasons to suspect that this supposedly scientific activation of the yearning for endless life does not in any way constitute an addition or an accident or a simple deviation from the serious transhumanist positions.

It is true that Sorgner will also point out that the fundamental questions of the human being, those that have to do with “the last things,” that is, death, judgment, God, immortality, “will not be answered with the help of biotechnological developments and will also not disappear” (Sorgner, 2016/2020, p. 72). If we read these words in their positive sense, or with good intentions, we will agree that a serious transhumanism cannot have anything to do with the dream of immortality, which here would mean that it is incapable of realizing it, although neither can it make it disappear. And even though, in my opinion, the solemn reference to God and the *Final Judgment* as “ultimate things” is not very coherent with either naturalist transhumanism or with Nietzschean philosophy, Sorgner is right to say this, because, without a doubt, techno-transcendence has for obvious reasons become one of the most popular issues, and one of the most commercial ones as well, of the transhumanist movement, since Robert Ettinger (1962/2005) launched the cryonics project in 1962. But for this very reason, and in order to prevent the danger of the proliferation of charlatans, the more or less veiled or deceptive promise of technological immortality should not be taken seriously by a rigorous or philosophical consideration.

#### **4. In Favour of a Nietzschean Transhumanism**

We know that usually the most productive creators are those who harbor the greatest contradictions in their bosom, fighting to dominate them until they give them a shape. This was certainly the case with Nietzsche. For this reason, and in spite of everything that has been said so far in this work, one can only agree with Sorgner that certain important lines of force can be observed in Nietzschean thought, which

undoubtedly call for it to be placed as a clear precedent of transhumanism. If this has been treated as the most dangerous idea in the world, it is undoubtedly due to its opposition to dualism and anthropocentrism. That is why it will offend anyone who continues to live culturally within the framework of the Platonic-Christian and Kantian traditions. By virtue of its immanent and anti-metaphysical philosophical foundation, transhumanism will find in Nietzsche's ideas the possibility of gaining intellectual depth by looking at a panorama different from conventional utilitarianism, which perhaps did not allow it to begin to move away from our dominant moralist past. On the other hand, Nietzscheans will have the possibility of making the excessively undetermined image of their overhuman more thinkable by articulating it with our intellectual prevalence of the technological revolution. Nietzsche's study will be able to bring to transhumanism, above all, that critical impulse which is so necessary in order to resist the dominant interests that condition us all so that they do not end up introducing into the debate the ever more habitual pseudophilosophy, which in the end translates into ascetic deviations that distort the interesting and relevant nucleus of transhumanist thought. In this final affirmation of a Nietzschean transhumanism, we can use Bamford's work (2017) because it is dedicated to demanding that essential element of what we could call an ethical transhumanism that does not take the problem of morality as solved once and for all, as has been done in all cases until now.

Nietzsche gives impetus to a new culture, a culture that is transvalued and therefore centred on the care of the body, because, according to the philosopher, in all the development of the spirit, what is at stake is the construction of a body strengthening itself and experimenting with new forms of life, of inhabiting, of eating, of exercising (Nietzsche 1980a, pp. 654–656).

Even Nietzsche's ambiguous "great politics" will pay attention, at the end of the philosopher's production, to the generation of an over-humanity based on physiology, as a culture of body care that aspires to great health (Nietzsche 1980b, pp. 637–638). It is by no means absurd to think that this new culture of the overhuman will do very well to rely on current technologies to see the Nietzschean project realized to a greater extent.

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