

Miloš Agatonović

## THE CASE OF TRANSHUMANISM: THE POSSIBILITY OF APPLICATION OF NIETZSCHE'S ETHICS AND CRITIQUE OF MORALITY TODAY

### ABSTRACT

Transhumanism, the movement that promotes radical enhancement by non-traditional means based in scientific and technological advances, has contributed to contemporary interest in Nietzsche's philosophy. In this paper, we are going to claim that transhumanists' references to Nietzsche's philosophy are unfounded. Moreover, we will make a few remarks about Nietzsche's ethical doctrine in order to show that his conception of enhancement, contrary to transhumanist conceptions, relies on traditional means, such as upbringing and education. Although Nietzsche's positive ethical doctrines cannot be used to justify transhumanist goals, his critique of morality can be used as a critique of the transhumanist conceptions of human enhancement.

### KEYWORDS

Nietzsche, *Übermensch*, will to power, enhancement, transhumanism, liberal eugenics

As a philosopher-advocate of life, Friedrich Nietzsche showed concern for the successful realization of life, for the manifestation of its creative and active essence. He wanted to stimulate creativity with his philosophy and to inspire achievements which would change our world view. Some political and cultural movements, that want to radically change the humanity in the name of allegedly better future, such as fascism, Nazism, anarchism or, in our recent times, transhumanism, found an inspiration in Nietzsche's philosophy. All of them used or are using an interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy which is in opposition to his own intentions. It is ironic that Nietzsche's followers plead for the views that he most severely criticized. That is the source of Nietzsche's forebodings which his Zarathustra expressed in his interpretation of the dream where he saw "a devil's grimace and scornful laughter." "Indeed," spoke Zarathustra, "all too well I understand the dream's sign and warning: my *teaching* is in danger, weeds want to be wheat!" (*TSZ II*, "The Child with Mirror").<sup>1</sup>

---

1 Citations of Nietzsche's published works that are used in this text follow the next abbreviations for reference to English translations: *A* = *The Antichrist*; *EH* = *Ecce Homo*; *GM* = *On the Genealogy of Morality*; *TI* = *Twilight of the Idols*; *TSZ* = *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; *UM* = *Untimely Meditations*.

## 1. Nietzsche's Conception of Enhancement is not Transhumanistic Conception

In his philosophy Nietzsche is primarily concerned with the questions about the way of human life. His answers to those questions do not impose any kind of concrete model of a right way of living. Any movement that would change mankind, that would enhance it in the name of a new social order, in the name of social progress, brings a slurring of men. According to Nietzsche, enhancement represents the natural tendency of life, although it has a different sense in different context. Prescribing enhancement would be suitable only if enhancement as a natural tendency was in danger or if there was a danger of an alienation of enhancement from natural tendencies. Only then, Nietzsche would think, could a philosopher have a role of a formative teacher, educator, legislator. Otherwise he would be like, to use Nietzsche's language, a "shepherd" or "priest-improver of humanity" who represents permanent threat of moralizing in a society. By trying to explain the danger of "improving," Nietzsche said:

People have always wanted to "improve" human beings; for the most part, this has been called morality. But this one term has stood for vastly different things. The project of *domesticating* the human beast as well as the project of *breeding* a certain species of human have both been called "improvements": only by using these zoological terms can we begin to express the realities here – realities, of course, that the typical proponents of „improvement,“ the priests, do not know anything about, do not *want* to know anything about... To call the domestication of an animal an "improvement" almost sounds like a joke to us. Anyone who knows what goes on in a zoo will have doubts whether beasts are "improved" there. They become weak, they become less harmful, they are *made ill* through the use of pain, injury, hunger, and the depressive affect of fear. – The same thing happens with domesticated people who have been "improved" by priests... To put the matter physiologically: when struggling with beasts, making them sick *might* be the only way to make them weak. The church understood this: it has ruined people, it has weakened them, – but it claims to have "improved" them... (TI, "Improving' Humanity", 2)

That danger exists even today, hidden behind the sophistication of the contemporary science and scientific breakthroughs. Contemporary "religion of improvement," dressed in the clothes of scientific progress, appeals to Nietzsche as its prophet. At the beginning of this century, with the development of science and technology, transhumanistic movement gained the momentum which is directed towards the future in its commitment to the radical enhancement of human being, the enhancement of all its psycho-physical capacities and functions in the way that specifically presupposes the application of non-traditional means, those of biomedicine (neuroscience, genetics, pharmacology) and those of technology (molecular nanotechnology, informational technology, artificial intelligence, robotics). The transhumanism, according to Max More, one of its founders, is essentially Nietzschean. Max More agrees with Nietzsche's view that nihilism is a transitional stage that we should leave behind, affirming a positive value-perspective (More 1990: 5). Stefan Sorgner, a philosopher-transhumanist of a younger generation, accepts More's view on the relation between Nietzsche's philosophy and transhumanism, with the intention to show that there is a fundamental resemblance in that relation

(Sorgner 2009). The main similarity, which abets us to jump to conclusion, is the adequacy between transhumanistic conception of posthuman, that is of radically enhanced man, and Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.<sup>2</sup> The thesis that Nietzsche's idea of *Übermensch* represents an anticipation of the transhumanistic conception of posthuman is dubious on several grounds. First, Nietzsche could not have had in mind radical enhancement of men by the nontraditional means, because of which the thesis of Nietzsche's idea of *Übermensch* as an anticipation of posthuman is anachronistic. Second, even if we put aside the anachronism of that thesis, because of an obscurity of Nietzsche's idea of *Übermensch* it would be inadequate to take it as a touchstone for a comparison of Nietzsche's philosophy to any other conception. The term "*Übermensch*" appears in Nietzsche's opus only in a few places, without needful elucidation.<sup>3</sup> In the later phase of Nietzsche's philosophy the idea of *Übermensch* is left out, and on the most important place, the place of the exemplary person, the higher type of man is put. As the higher type Nietzsche recognized the great men and nations of the past, and also the distinguished individuals of his own time, who certainly are not enhanced by genetic engineering or symbiosis with some progressive artificial intelligence.

Although we have pointed at the exegetical problems of the thesis of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* as anticipation of posthuman, we have not denied the claim that Nietzsche is the forerunner of transhumanism yet. His doctrine of will to power gives enough stimulation for transhumanistic interpretation. If someone seeks power, and Nietzsche assumes that is the characteristic of life in general, then it is in his own interest to enhance himself (Sorgner 2009). For Nietzsche, tendency to power is a natural tendency to enhancement. If there is already tendency to power by nature, and therefore tendency to enhancement, does it mean that the one *should* seek power and, respectively, enhancement? According to the interpretation that we plead for, power and enhancement in Nietzsche's philosophy have a relative, context-dependent meaning. In a biological context power or enhancement has the meaning of the growth and development of biological functions of organism, in a psychological context the meaning of feeling of power, self-confidence and self-control, which are acquired by an overcoming of frustrations and resolution of psychological conflicts, in a social context the meaning of social recognition and prerogative which comes with the recognition. The given meanings of the enhancement are logically independent: an enhancement in biological sense is possible without enhancement in psychological and social sense, and likewise. Transhumanism insists on enhancing biological base of humans on which it is possible

2 Sorgner translates Nietzsche's term "*Übermensch*" as overhuman, because of its gender-neutrality (Sorgner 2009). Contrary to that, Paul Loeb prefers to use Latin prefix "Super-" for German "*Über-*," although thinks that "*mensch*" should be translated gender-neutral as Sorgner suggests, following Graham Parkes' and Adrian Del Caro's translation of *Zarathustra* (Loeb 2012: 3–4).

3 In Nietzsche's published works term "*Übermensch*" appears in *Zarathustra*, in some parts his intellectual autobiography (*EH*, "Why I Write Such a Good Books", 1; *ibid*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra", 6; *ibid*, "Why am I a Destiny", 5), on the one place in *Twilight of the Idols* (TI, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," 37), in *The Antichrist* (A, 4), and *On the Genealogy of Morality* (GM I, 16). It also appears in several fragments from his unpublished writings.

to directly apply the means of biomedicine and technology. It is questionable if an enhancement of human biological base would bring the psychological or social enhancement, and, moreover, if biological enhancement would be justified at all.

The specific enhancement that transhumanists are concerned with usually is justified by the general utility. For Nick Bostrom, one of the leading transhumanists today, transhumanism is based on the values of enlightenment, individual liberty and general welfare, and for that reason it is more akin to English liberal thinker and utilitarian John Stuart Mill than to Nietzsche (Bostrom 2005a: 4–5). Therefore, similarities between Nietzsche’s philosophy and transhumanism are just surface-level similarities, as Bostrom holds. We can think that Nietzsche’s doctrine of *Übermensch* has inspired transhumanism, but Nietzsche did not have in mind a technological transformation, only a cultural and personal uplifting (ibid: 4). Sorgner opposes to Bostrom’s view of the relation between Nietzsche’s philosophy and transhumanism, thinking that although Nietzsche did not have in mind a technological transformation of men he does not exclude the possibility of technological enhancement (Sorgner 2009). Sorgner would not exclude the possibility that Nietzsche would be in favour of genetic engineering, because he affirmed science, he was in favour of enhancement, and the bringing about of the overhuman (ibid). For his Nietzsche-transhumanist enhancement is justified by interest of a man to seek power. The enhancement is useful for it helps to acquire power which men seek, or it can help men to become *Übermensch*. However, Nietzsche never said without a mask that men should become *Übermensch*. In fact, it was Zarathustra’s words “*I teach you the overman (Ich lehre euch den Übermenschen)*. Human being is something that must be overcome... What is the ape to a human? A laughing stock or a painful embarrassment... Behold, I teach you the overman! The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman *shall be* the meaning of the earth!” (TSZ, “Zarathustra’s Prologue”, 3). One of the rare places from Nietzsche’s opus where the word “*Übermensch*” appears, in the book *Ecce homo*, Nietzsche says that that word designates “a type that has the highest constitutional excellence, in contrast to ‘modern’ people, to good people, Christians and other nihilists – a word that really makes you think when it comes from the mouth of a Zarathustra, a *destroyer* of morals; this word ‘*overman*’ is understood almost everywhere with complete innocence to mean values that are the *opposite* from the ones appearing in the figure of Zarathustra, which is to say the ‘idealistic’ type of higher sort of humanity, half ‘saint,’ half ‘genius’... Other scholarly cattle have suspected me of Darwinism for these reasons; they even read into it the ‘cult of hero’ that I condemn so bitterly, the invention of that unknowing and involuntary counterfeiter Carlyle. If I whisper to people that this type would look more like a Cesare Borgia than a Pasifal, they do not believe their ears” (EH, “Why I Write Such Good Books”, 1). This place confirms that Nietzsche’s ideal is the real person (*der wirkliche Mensch*) and not ideal one (*idealen Menschen*) (TI, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man”, 32), and so it is not “*Übermensch*” as “the ‘idealistic’ type of higher sort of humanity.”

Nietzsche was inexorably expressing the imperative “become what you are.” And for men to become what they are is not sufficient, or even necessary, to enhance their biology. Before all, there is a need for understanding the context of man’s life

and knowing conditions in it. And because those are different kinds of conditions, there is a need for exchange between different sciences, those that Nietzsche specifies in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, psychology, physiology and medicine (GM I, 17, “Note”). The values and norms that conduct lives of men, which are known to history and ethnology, represent the conditions of the important influence. A philosopher, according to Nietzsche, should advocate this relationship between sciences and mediate in their investigation of values, so he could solve the *problem of values* and decide *rank order of values* (ibid). That is the future work of philosopher (ibid). To know how one should live and which values are valuable for life we should understand the historical context of life and identify the effective conditions in it. That is true on the level of any social collective as a whole and on the individual level of a person. Second, regarding the results of investigating life we should stimulate the conditions that are valuable to life, those which contribute to its harmony, but which are always connected to a context and relative to it. Therefore, third, we should have in mind examples of higher men and higher cultures, and in accordance with those examples stimulate the conditions which would in given historical context give birth to an original high value culture and to exceptional individuals without whom such culture would not be possible.

A creative culture and efficacious individuals for Nietzsche are the examples of the ideal that he advocated. That appears to be the only ostensible similarity between Nietzsche’s philosophy and transhumanism. Bostrom thinks that the ambit of transhumanistic enhancement, besides technology and medicine, also encompasses economic, social and institutional designs, cultural development, and psychological skills and techniques (Bostrom 2005b: 4). For Nietzsche cultural development should come first. Surely, Nietzsche had no idea about nontraditional means that transhumanists advocate, although he would have permitted the application of such means since he did not have conservative views. However, he emphasizes the importance of education and upbringing in stimulation of cultural and individual creativity as the best means that enables us to become what we are. In his work *Schopenhauer as Educator*, where the question of education and upbringing is explicitly thematized, Nietzsche says that “certainly there may be other means of finding oneself, of coming to oneself out of the bewilderment in which one usually wanders as in a dark cloud, but,” he continues, “I know of none better than to think on one’s true educators and cultivators” (UM, “Schopenhauer as Educator”, 1). For him, an educator (*Erzieher*) is the bearer of the high culture who assists us in becoming what we are by giving us an example of his own posture. The true upbringing and education is not an external aid, as paternalistic education is, which is regularly the object of Nietzsche’s critique (in the final stage of his work, in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and *Will to Power*, such education is described by the pejorative expression “improvement (*Verbessert*)”). According to Nietzsche’s own words, true educators and formative teachers are the “liberators”:

Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you that the true, original meaning and basic stuff of your nature is something completely incapable of being educated or formed and is in any case something difficult of access, bound and paralyzed; your educators can be only your liberators. And that is the secret of all culture: it

does not provide artificial limbs, wax noses or spectacles – that which can provide these things is, rather, only sham education. Culture is liberation, the removal of all the weeds, rubble and vermin that want to attack the tender buds of the plant, an outstreaming of light and warmth, the gentle rustling of nocturnal rain, it is imitation and worship of nature where nature is in her motherly and merciful mood, it is the perfecting of nature when it deflects her cruel and merciless assaults and turns them to good, and when it draws a veil over the expressions of nature’s stepmotherly mood and her sad lack of understanding. (ibid)

The true educators by the examples of their own life show how to get to self-knowledge, how to recognize the difference between the life-useful conditions and those that are harmful or not useful to life, and how to free yourself from the harmful ones and stimulate those that are useful. In that way man can accomplish his true nature, which “lies immeasurably high above him” (ibid). Despite Nietzsche’s belief that true nature of man lies high above him, his philosophy cannot be interpreted as transhumanistic. The best means for self-knowledge, self-accomplishment, self-affirmation is the education by looking up to higher men. The higher men are the great creators, philosophers, and artists, whose personal example brings us to emancipation. Biomedicine and technology cannot help our self-accomplishment and self-affirmation. Their application could make us dependent upon contemporary means of enhancement, and so spoil our emancipation and alienate us on our way to becoming what we are. It appears that Nietzsche’s ethics, grounded on the ideal of affirmation of life, could appropriately be applied only in education. For, if the answer of the basic ethical question “how one should live?” can be grasped by describing the life of higher men as an example of the affirmation of life, then that answer concerns education before all, its evaluation and recommendation in concrete circumstances. Therefore, as other scholars also think, it is justified to claim that whole Nietzsche’s philosophy project could be understood as an educational enterprise (Dobrijević 2009: 119).

## **2. Some Possible Use of Nietzsche’s Critique of Morality Against the Transhumanistic Accounts of Enhancement**

Although, as we have already suggested, Nietzsche’s positive ethical doctrine cannot be applied in justification of transhumanistic goals, his critique of morality can be applied against the ethical reasonings in transhumanism. Rooted in the enlightenment’s heritage of trust in rationality and science, transhumanism accepted enlightenment’s humanistic values of liberty and general welfare. Transhumanists advocate application of nontraditional means of enhancement appealing to general welfare of humanity or the value of man as an intrinsic value. Julian Savulescu, for example, takes a provocative transhumanistic position: enhancement represents the moral obligation (Savulescu 2007: 517). He justifies that position appealing to well-being of men: biological manipulation to increase opportunity for human well-being is ethical (ibid: 525). Besides that, in another place, Savulescu, together with Ingmar Persson, claims that biomedical moral enhancement would be the most important biomedical enhancement and without it other techniques of biomedical enhancement seem likely to increase global injustice (Savulescu & Persson

2010: 12–3). The increasing growth of advanced technology makes our lives better, but also provides the means of our destruction. Therefore, transhumanism offers a moral enhancement as means which can help us to address the dangers that the progress of technology brings (ibid, 13). This position could be characterized as moralistic, and if we could reduce it to its motto “to be human is to be better” (Savulescu 2007: 531), we would see that it is basically tautological. Human in normative sense of the term, in terms of those capacities that afford members of our species moral status and value (Savulescu & Persson 2010: 13), which means in terms of capacities that make human be better, means to be better. According to that position enhancement is recommended on the grounds of what human in value sense should be, or, in apparent tautological formulation, humans should be enhanced because they should be better. Nietzsche would criticize this position by pointing to its ungrounded optimism in seeking general well-being and to an inappropriateness of the universal application of enhancement for the sake of well-being of all, no matter what kind of means are used in enhancement. Because of the differentiation of life, of the exceptions that cannot be conducted by the norms of majority, such as the great creators that provide unique contributions, the enhancement for the sake of general well-being would actually be a ruining. Even caution in such enhancement, caution that is, as Savulescu admits, well grounded (Savulescu 2007: 517), could not provide the justice for the exceptions that Nietzsche wants to protect. That is why Nietzsche recommends an independent education guided by valuable examples of people, the great creators, philosophers and artists.

Contrary to Savulescu’s morally obligated enhancement, Nicolas Agar, who can, as we hold, be classified as a transhumanist, in the defence of enhancement advocates the position that he calls “liberal eugenics.” According to the position of liberal eugenics an enhancement by nontraditional means such as genetic engineering should not be obligatory but only a permissible option. According to Agar, parents should be empowered to use available technologies to choose some of their children’s characteristics (Agar 2004: 2). Parents’ selection of enhancement for a child would be guided by certain conceptions of a good life. Parents’ ranking of life plans, their ranking of what is valuable in life, provides the definition of enhancement for them: a gene therapy will enhance their child if it improves the child’s chances of successfully pursuing life plans that they rank highly (ibid, 101). Liberal eugenics assumes pluralistic conception of human flourishing, or, respectively, of a good life, contrary to monistic conception such of Nazism or of, a less problematic, hedonistic utilitarianism (ibid, 100–1). Despite the pluralism and a wide range of positive freedoms, the position of liberal eugenics implies paternalism. Any enhancement that is guided from the outside, even when parents and benevolent experts conduct the enhancement, is paternalistic, and according to Nietzsche’s opinion it can make affirmation of the great creators impossible, which would be the greatest pity. For the great creators genetic enhancement would not be of the decisive importance if the conditions for true education were not accomplished. Perhaps Nietzsche would not be against the application of nontraditional means of enhancement, but his position strongly holds the belief that for the affirmation of life many other things are of greater importance, such as exemplary persons and values that shape current historical and cultural context.

### 3. Conclusion

In the twentieth century Nietzsche's ideas were used for the propaganda purposes of fascism and Nazism. It is questionable if Nietzsche is responsible for the interpretation of his philosophy that puts him into the context of those notorious political movements. However, Nietzsche's doctrines of *Übermensch*, higher and lower men, will to power give us a straightforward reason to think, though falsely, of his philosophy as being a predecessor of any movement that aims at the enhancement of men, or some kind of eugenics. In the recent years, the movement of transhumanism sets the posthuman age, that is to come if the technology and science is used in the right way to radically enhance men and women, as the goal that humanity should reach. The spirit of optimism and trust in science, common to transhumanism and some important aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy in its mature form, is the consequence of the Age of Enlightenment. Nick Bostrom openly acknowledges that transhumanism has its roots in rational humanism of the Age of Enlightenment (Bostrom 2005a: 3). Nietzsche, on the other hand, was highly critical of the Enlightenment movement. However, he absorbed the spirit of German Enlightenment, Kant and German materialist (Leiter 2012: 50–6). He also read English Enlightenment thinkers, John Stuart Mill for example, but criticized their mostly utilitarian approach. In *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche said that utilitarian explanation of the concept of good is rational and psychologically tenable, although that explanation is wrong (*GM*, I, 3). Nietzsche himself accepted usefulness and practicality as important kind of motivation in human life, but power, of which usefulness and practicality are just one aspect, is the most important life goal that provides the strongest motive for any activity in life. In the same work Nietzsche wrote: “[E]very purpose and use is just a sign that the will to power has achieved mastery over something less powerful, and has impressed upon it its own idea (*Sinn*) of a use function” (*GM*, II, 12). A few sentences further in the *Genealogy* it is said that true progress always appears in the form of the will or way to *greater power* (ibid). Nietzsche's wanted to describe the kind of instrumental rationality that is immanent to life in a broad sense.

Transhumanists think that to improve humanity and to reach posthuman state in which human beings are radically enhanced in every way, in every sense, it is necessary to use the means that science and technology provide. “Knowledge itself is power,” Francis Bacon said, and transhumanists concur. Bostrom explicitly claims: “Bacon advocated the project of ‘effecting all things possible,’ by which he meant using science to achieve mastery over nature in order to improve the living condition of human beings” (Bostrom 2005a: 2). Nietzsche also thought that all science could be helpful in solving the problem of values and decide the rank order of values, as we mentioned before. The question “what has a value for men?,” or, better to say, “what is prudent for men?,” Nietzsche thought should be approached from the different perspectives, as he had put it in the *Genealogy*:

[T]he question ‘value for what?’ cannot be examined too finely. Something, for example, which obviously had value with regard to the longest possible life-span of a race (or to the improvement of its abilities to adapt to a particular climate, or to maintaining the greatest number) would not have anything like the same value if it was a question of developing a stronger type. (*GM*, I, 17, “Note”)



Power, that should be obtained, differs in meaning depending on context, as we previously claimed. Therefore, the application of sciences and technology that produce power should differ depending on context, at least it is so according to our interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy. Regarding that, we are justified to say that Nietzsche's philosophy is relevant when we think about problems of transhumanism. Although the application of technological achievements would not be of the key importance for Nietzsche. The greatness of men, according to his opinion, mostly depends on the adequate education, formation, social-cultural values, examples of human excellence. The technological enhancement would not be obligatory, nor would it be a respectable option, if a person was already well formed. Also, the external application of it on children, newborns, or embryos would be redundant if the greatness of individual could autonomously be developed from their inborn psycho-physical material. The self-overcoming (*Selbstüberwindung*), about which Nietzsche claimed that is the essence of life itself, in the context of his educational philosophy represents the process of self-improvement of autodidact by which person creates themselves. To say that improving humans by the means of progressive biomedicine and technology is morally obligatory, as some transhumanists say (e. g. Julian Savulescu), means to take one sense of improvement of men as adequate and necessary for any man, whether or not there is a real need for it. Nietzsche explicitly criticized moralistic norms that are regarded as universal, Kantian concept of duty and utilitarian concept of good as universal value. In the *Anti-Christ* Nietzsche wrote:

“Virtue,” “duty,” “goodness in itself,” goodness that has been stamped with the character of impersonal and universal valid – these are fantasies and manifestations of decline, of the final exhaustion of life, of the Königsberg Chinesianity. The most basic laws of preservation and growth require the opposite: that everyone should invent his *own* virtues, his *own* categorical imperatives. A people is destroyed when it confuses its *own* duty with the concept of duty in general. Nothing ruins us more profoundly or inwardly than ‘impersonal’ duty, or any sacrifice in front of the Moloch of abstraction. (A, 11)

Supposedly, Nietzsche would oppose to the enhancement of men that uses the means of medicine and technology if it would be guided by the universal moral considerations. He would also oppose to the selective enhancement that is guided by the parents or experts. One of the most important conditions of self-overcoming, as the kind of enhancement that Nietzsche favoured when he thought of the great men and creators, is the self-knowledge. To overcome oneself, one has to know oneself. Through the words of Zarathustra, who spoke to his disciples, Nietzsche said:

Let your spirit and your virtue serve the meaning of the earth, my brothers: and the value of all things will be posited newly by you! Therefore you shall be fighters! Therefore you shall be creators!

Knowingly the body purifies itself; experimenting with knowledge it elevates itself; all instincts become sacred in the seeker knowledge; the soul of the elevated one becomes gay.

Physician, help yourself: thus also help your sick. Let that be his best help, that he sees with his own eyes the one who heels himself.

(*TSZ*, I, “On the Bestowing Virtue”)

Nietzsche's language in the book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, from which is the cited passage, is heavy with metaphors. On this specific place he clearly emphasized the point that you need to know yourself; you need to know your own body, so you could elevate yourself. And, as Nietzsche firmly held, a one needs to sovereignly use one's own capacities and so to become better. Nietzsche would oppose even to the liberal eugenics that is defended by Nicolas Agar, because it leaves open the option of parents and experts to decide what kind of enhancement is needful for the child that was born or is to be born. But, all things considered, it would not be honest to say that Nietzsche was conservative and that he opposed to any kind of enhancement. He accepted progress of science, medicine and biology, and encouraged its use in examination of the life of men. Though, he was careful to think that science could easily be misused and bring disastrous consequences to the human kind, if guided by abstract representations of an ideal of some kind or universal moral good.

#### References:

- Agar, Nicolas (2004), *Liberal Eugenics: In Defence of Human Enhancement*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bostrom, Nick (2005a), "A History of Transhumanist Thought," *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 14 (1): 1–25.
- (2005b), "Transhumanist Values," in: F. Adams (ed.), *Ethical Issues for the 21st Century*, Charlottesville: Philosophy Documentation Center, pp. 3–14.
- Dobrijević, Aleksandar (2009), "Pohvala autodidaktici: Niče kao teoretičar rigoroznog samoobrazovanja," in *Theoria* 52 (2).
- Loeb, Paul S. (2012), "Nietzsche's Transhumanism," *The Agonist* 4 (2).
- More, Max (1990), "Transhumanism: Towards a futurist philosophy," *Extropy* (6): 6–13.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (2005), *The Antichrist*, translated by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2005), *Ecce Homo*, translated by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2006), *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by C. Diethe, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2006), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated by A. Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2005), *Twilight of the Idols*, translated by J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1997), *Untimely Meditations*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Savulescu, Julian and Ingmar Persson (2010), "Moral Transhumanism," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 35 (6): 656–669
- Savulescu, Julian (2007), "Genetic Interventions and Ethics of Enhancement of Human Beings," in: B. Steinbock (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 516–535.
- Sorgner, Stefan Lorenz (2009), "Nietzsche, the Overhuman, and Transhumanism," *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 20 (1): 29–42.

Miloš Agatonović

## Slučaj transhumanizma: mogućnost primene Ničeove etike i kritike morala danas

### Apstrakt

Transhumanizam, pokret koji se zalaže za radikalno poboljšanje sredstvima koja su rezultat naučnog i tehnološkog napretka, doprineo je interesovanju za Ničeovu filozofiju danas. U ovom radu navešćemo razloge na osnovu kojih ćemo sugerisati da su ta pozivanja na Ničeovu filozofiju neosnovana. Pri tom ćemo izložiti nekoliko teza o Ničeovom etičkom učenju kako bismo pokazali da se njegovo shvatanje poboljšanja, za razliku od transhumanističkih, oslanja na tradicionalna sredstva kao što su vaspitanje i obrazovanje. Iako se Ničeova pozitivna etička učenja ne mogu primeniti u opravdanju transhumanističkih ciljeva, njegova kritika morala može se upotrebiti u kritici transhumanističkih koncepcija poboljšanja čoveka.

Ključne reči: Niče, *Übermensch*, volja za moć, poboljšanje, transhumanizam, liberalna eugenika

