



Nietzsche, the Overhuman, and Transhumanism

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Abstract

Bostrom rejects Nietzsche as an ancestor of the transhumanist movement, as he claims that there were merely some “surface-level similarities with the Nietzschean vision” (Bostrom 2005a, 4). In contrast to Bostrom, I think that significant similarities between the posthuman and the overhuman can be found on a fundamental level. In addition, it seems to me that Nietzsche explained the relevance of the overhuman by referring to a dimension which seems to be lacking in transhumanism. In order to explain my position, I will progress as follows. First, I will compare the concept of the posthuman to that of Nietzsche’s overhuman, focusing more on their similarities than their differences. Second, I will contextualise the overhuman in Nietzsche’s general vision, so that I can point out which dimension seems to me to be lacking in transhumanist thought.

Introduction

When I first became familiar with the transhumanist movement, I immediately thought that there were many fundamental similarities between transhumanism and Nietzsche’s philosophy, especially concerning the concept of the posthuman and that of Nietzsche’s overhuman. This is what I wish to show in this article. I am employing the term “overhuman instead of “overman,” because in German the term *Übermensch* can apply to both sexes, which the notion *overhuman* can, but *overman* cannot. I

discovered, however, that Bostrom, a leading transhumanist, rejects Nietzsche as an ancestor of the transhumanist movement, as he claims that there are merely some “surface-level similarities with the Nietzschean vision” (Bostrom 2005a, 4).

In contrast to Bostrom, I think that significant similarities between the posthuman and the overhuman can be found on a fundamental level. Habermas agrees with me in that respect, as he has already referred to the similarities in these two ways of thinking. However, he seems to regard both of them as absurd. At least, he refers to transhumanists as a bunch of mad intellectuals who luckily have not managed to establish support for their elitist views from a bigger group of supporters (Habermas 2001, 43).¹

In addition, it seems to me that Nietzsche explained the relevance of the overhuman by referring to a dimension which seems to be lacking in transhumanism. In order to explain my position, I will progress as follows. First, I will compare the concept of the posthuman to that of Nietzsche’s overhuman, focusing more on their similarities than on their differences. Second, I will contextualise the overhuman in Nietzsche’s general vision, so that I can point out which dimension seems to me to be lacking in transhumanist thought.

1 The posthuman and Nietzsche’s overhuman

Before, I focus directly on the comparison between posthumans and Nietzsche’s overhuman, I will deal with some fundamental principles of Bostrom’s version of transhumanism, where the concept of the posthuman can be found, and corresponding principles within Nietzsche’s thought. I will give a short comparison of their dynamic views of nature and values, and their positions concerning human nature, enhancement, education, the revaluation of values, and evolution towards a higher species.

1.1 The evolution of human nature, and values

First, both transhumanists and Nietzsche hold a dynamic view of nature and values. “Transhumanists view human nature as a work-in-progress,” Bostrom says (2005b, 1).

So does Nietzsche. He holds a dynamic will-to-power metaphysics which applies to human and all other beings, and which implies that all things are permanently undergoing some change.² There is nothing which is eternally fixed. According to Nietzsche, human beings are organisms constituted out of individual power quanta or will-to-power constellations. One can clarify his concept by reference to

Leibniz's monadology.³ A power quantum is a single entity like a monad. In contrast to the monad, it can interact with other power quanta, it can grow, it can nourish itself (which has to be understood metaphorically), and it has a perspective on the world. This perspective enables the quantum to decide what to do next, which depends upon its options and its conception of power whereby it employs an extremely wide and open notion of power. Every state, in which a power quantum is stronger, more capable, than another, and has the potential to dominate the other, represents a state of power.

According to Nietzsche, all entities are constituted out of such power constellations. The dynamics of power also underlie the process of evolution, which was responsible for bringing about the human species, animals, and plants. All organisms came into existence because the conditions were such that bringing about the respective organisms was the best possible means for realising the striving for power of the preceding organisms. Eventually, human beings came into existence.

However, the species "human being," like every species, is not eternally fixed and immutable. It came into existence, it can fade out of existence, and it can evolve into a different species. Individual members of a species have only a certain limited potential, which is limited by their belonging to a specific species. Each species represents a species not only because it is a community whose members have the potential to reproduce themselves with one another, but also because its members have certain limits.

A human being as a human being has only a limited amount of potential and capacities, as he belongs to the human species, and any species is defined by its limits. It cannot go beyond that limit. If a human being has acquired special capacities, then she cannot pass them on to her descendants, Nietzsche holds. However, a certain kind of Lamarckism can also be found in Nietzsche, as he stresses that certain tendencies can get inherited. If a man likes to eat well, and to enjoy the company of women, then it is advisable for his son not to live a chaste and ascetic life (KSA, 4, 356-68).

Given a certain social and individual state, which Nietzsche does not describe in detail, evolution can take place, and the species can evolve – something also maintained by transhumanists. Bostrom points out: "A common understanding is that it would be naive to think that the human condition and human nature will remain pretty much the same for very much longer" (Bostrom 2001).

Nietzsche might not be as optimistic as Bostrom: he does not argue that an evolutionary progress in which human beings are involved will take place soon. However, he does agree with transhumanists that it will happen eventually, if the human species does not cease to exist.

In addition to the ontological dynamics, which can be found both in transhumanism and in Nietzsche's philosophy, the same dynamics also applies to the level of values. Here, Bostrom claims:

Transhumanism is a dynamic philosophy, intended to evolve as new information becomes available or challenges emerge. One transhumanist value is therefore to cultivate a questioning attitude and a willingness to revise one's beliefs and assumptions. (Bostrom 2001.)

Nietzsche agrees that values have undergone many changes. He presents his interpretation of the evolution of values in his account of the "Genealogy of Morals" (KSA, 5, 257-89). Values undergo a change on various levels, on a social and cultural level as well as on a personal one. Nietzsche's concept of power, to which the concept of value is closely related, can change given new experiences and insights. The content of the concept of power is perspectival (Sorgner 2007, 79-83). There are no absolute and unchanging values, as there is no Platonic realm of ideas in which something could remain fixed.

1.2 Science, enhancement, and education

Both Nietzsche and transhumanists have an outlook on the world which diverges significantly from the traditional Christian one, or one which has inherited many Christian values. As one can still find many elements of Christian thinking in the value system of many people today, both Nietzsche and transhumanists are in favour of bringing about a reevaluation of values.

Bostrom emphasizes: "Transhumanists insist that our received moral precepts and intuitions are not in general sufficient to guide policy" (Bostrom 2001). Consequently, he suggests values that take into consideration a dynamic view of the world:

We can thus include in our list of transhumanist values that of promoting understanding of where we are and where we are headed. This value encloses others: critical thinking, open-mindedness, scientific inquiry, and open discussion are all important helps for increasing society's intellectual readiness. (Bostrom 2001.)

Nietzsche agrees again. His respect for critical thinking was immense – he is widely regarded as one of the harshest critics of morality and religion. Furthermore, he also values scientific inquiry immensely (Sorgner 2007, 140-45), even though his respect for science has often been underestimated. In various

passages, he points out that the future age will be governed by a scientific spirit, which is why he thinks that many future people will regard his philosophy as plausible, as his way of thinking is supposed to appeal to scientifically minded people.

Nietzsche's high regard for the sciences has been recognized by most leading Nietzsche scholars.⁴ His theory of the eternal recurrence is based upon premises which have been held by many scientists. His will-to-power anthropology bears many similarities to scientific ones. Even though he is critical of Darwin, he also holds a theory of evolution. Nietzsche very often is most critical of thinkers who are closest to his own understanding of things. In Darwin's case, Nietzsche's critique is mainly rooted in his concept that human beings strive solely for power. Hence, a concept which implies that a struggle for existence or a will to life was the fundamental human drive is one from which he feels the need to distinguish himself (Sorgner 2007, 62). Human beings strive for power. The struggle for existence represents only a marginal type of expression of the fundamental will-to-power.

If you will power, then it is in your interest to enhance yourself. Enhancement, however, is just what transhumanists aim for. Transhumanism is in favour of technologies and other means which could be used for "enhancement of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities" (Bostrom 2001) so that posthumans could come into existence. Consequently, Bostrom stresses that transhumanists value a type of liberalism, which implies that people have the right to choose "to live much longer and healthier lives, to enhance their memory and other intellectual faculties, to refine their emotional experiences and subjective sense of well-being, and generally to achieve a greater degree of control over their own lives" (Bostrom 2005b, 1). Bostrom obviously has gone into more detail concerning what all of these demands do and do not imply. However, what is important is that he, in contrast to Habermas, values the option for parents to choose the genetic makeup of their children.

Habermas distinguishes between children who simply became who they are and those who were made in a specific manner (Habermas 2001, 41, 45, 80-93), and claims the following. First, the parents' act of imposition of a genetic makeup is supposed to be immoral, as children are supposed to feel forced into a certain direction, if their genetic makeup was chosen by their parents, more so than if they became who they are by chance (Habermas 2001, 53-55). Second, there is supposed to be a difference between educating one's children and deciding about their genetic makeup (Habermas 2001, 31, 87-114). Children are supposed to be able to do something against the way they are being educated (Habermas 2001, 100), and education is supposed to bring about only qualities which can get changed again. A genetic makeup, however, cannot get altered again (Habermas 2001, 111). Therefore, according to Habermas, choosing a

genetic makeup for one's children and educating them are, morally-speaking, two different types of acts concerning their moral evaluation.

Bostrom points out the following: "Transhumanists also hold that there is no special ethical merit in playing genetic roulette. Letting chance determine the genetic identity of our children may spare us directly from directly confronting some difficult choices" (Bostrom 2001). Accordingly, he simply rejects Habermas' first point. It seems to be implicit in his position that most parents love their children, from which follows that most parents aim for the good for their children. That good can be something the parents regard as good, or something which they regard as in the interest of the child. No matter which concept of the good the parents favour, it is usually better that parents decide than that the child's genetic potential is the result of a genetic roulette, or of a chance outcome. Consequently, Bostrom argues, Habermas' second criticism does not hold either. If the genetic design that parents decide on is better, in most cases, than that which they receive by chance, then obviously it does not matter morally that it cannot get altered, at least not as easily as qualities which one developed as a result of education. One might even be tempted to say that, in most cases, it is even better that these qualities cannot get altered, as they are a good for the child. Here, it also must be noted that it is far from clear whether Habermas' second point is correct. It might be the case that many qualities one develops on the basis of one's education are embedded so deeply in one's personality that they cannot get altered significantly either.

Critics of genetic engineering also tend to stress the dangers related to new technological methods: that some things will certainly go wrong in the beginning, and that one must not play around with human beings, or treat them solely as a means. Concerning such worries, Bostrom responds: "Transhumanism tends toward pragmatism [...] taking a constructive, problem-solving approach to challenges, favouring methods that experience tells us give good results, and taking the initiative to 'do something about it' rather than just sit around complaining" (Bostrom 2001). He is right, as all scientists and technicians who aim for new goals have to be brave as they enter new, potentially dangerous waters. The same applies to researchers in the field of genetic engineering. We would not have discovered America, or developed smallpox vaccination, if there had not been people brave enough to do what was essential for fulfilling these tasks.

Courage is a significant virtue within Nietzsche's favoured morality. In addition, he stresses the importance of science for the forthcoming centuries, and does not reject that development. Given these two premises, I cannot exclude the possibility that Nietzsche would have been in favour of genetic engineering, even though he mainly stresses the importance of education for the occurrence of the

evolutionary step towards the overhuman. If genetic engineering, or liberal eugenics, can actually be seen as a special type of education, which is what transhumanists seem to hold, then it is possible that this position would have been held by Nietzsche, too, as education played a significant role in his ethics. He affirmed science, and he was in favour of enhancement, and the bringing about of the overhuman.

1.3 The perspectival view of values, and the Renaissance genius

Transhumanists do not intend to impose their values upon other people, as “transhumanists place emphasis on individual freedom and individual choice in the area of enhancement technologies” (Bostrom 2005b). One reason for holding this position is that Bostrom regards it as “a fact that humans differ widely in their conceptions of what their own perfection would consist in” (Bostrom 2001). And: “The second reason for this element of individualism is the poor track record of collective decision-making in the domain of human improvement. The eugenics movement, for example, is thoroughly discredited” (Bostrom 2001). Besides the fact that Bostrom here uses the word “eugenics” but refers to state regulated eugenics only, which I do not regard as a useful way of employing that notion (Sorgner 2006, 201-209), he puts forward a position that can be called a perspectival view of values. Nietzsche also defends such a view.

Each power constellation, and hence each human being, according to Nietzsche, has a different perspective on the world and as each individual concept of power depends on who one is and which history one has had, each human being has a unique concept of power, and consequently a unique conception “of what their own perfection would consist in.” Nietzsche himself has a clear concept of power, and what he regards as the highest feeling of power which is directly connected to the classical ideal (Sorgner 2007, 53-58). A similar ideal seems to be upheld by transhumanists, according to Bostrom:

Transhumanism imports from secular humanism the ideal of the fully-developed and well-rounded personality. We can't all be renaissance geniuses, but we can strive to constantly refine ourselves and to broaden our intellectual horizons. (Bostrom 2001.)

Not only the aspect of the “fully-developed and well-rounded personality” can be found in Nietzsche, but also the striving “to constantly refine ourselves and to broaden our intellectual horizons.” In Nietzsche, this aspect is called “overcoming” (KSA, 4, 146-49). Higher humans wish to permanently overcome themselves, to become stronger in the various aspects which can get developed in a human being, so that

finally the overhuman can come into existence. In transhumanist thought, Nietzsche's overhuman is being referred to as "posthuman."

1.4 The posthuman, the transhuman, and Nietzsche's overhuman

Who is a posthuman? Which qualities does he have? I think that the only qualities which all transhumanists can subscribe to are the following: "we lack the capacity to form a realistic intuitive understanding of what it would be like to be posthuman" (Bostrom 2001). However, various transhumanists have tried to describe a posthuman in more detail. According to Bostrom, F.M. Esfandiary held the following concept: "a transhuman is a 'transitional human', someone who by virtue of their technology usage, cultural values, and lifestyle constitutes an evolutionary link to the coming era of posthumanity" (Bostrom 2005a, 12). In that case, a transhuman would still belong to the species of human beings which, however, in some aspects has already developed qualities that stretch the concept of a human being, and have the potential to establish themselves as the basis for the evolutionary step to a new species. The new species that represents a further stage of evolution is referred to as the posthumans. Hence, transhumans and human beings have the capacity to reproduce themselves with each other, but posthumans would not, in the same way that we cannot reproduce ourselves with great apes, at least not in a sexual manner. It might even be the case that posthumans need to rely on technological means for reproduction.

Bostrom's concept of the posthuman seems to be slightly different from Esfandiary's: "By a posthuman capacity, I mean a general central capacity greatly exceeding the maximum attainable by any current human being without recourse to new technological means" (Bostrom forthcoming, 1). It becomes clear that posthuman capacities cannot be identical to the qualities current human beings have. However, Bostrom still thinks that we⁵ can develop into such a being. He thereby does not refer to us as the species of human beings which can evolve into a new species with capacities which are far more complex than our own, but he thinks that any human being, by means of technology or other methods, might be able to develop into a posthuman. He even claims: "This could make it possible for personal identity to be preserved during the transformation into posthuman" (Bostrom forthcoming, 15). Therefore, he seems to have in mind that both current human beings, as well as posthumans, belong to the species of human beings which implies that they have the potential to reproduce themselves with another by means of sexual reproduction. Posthumans are not a separate species but a particular group of humans with capacities which cannot yet be imagined by us, but which can involve an enhancement in all human

aspects including a physiological, emotional, or intellectual enhancement. Bostrom suggests that it is most likely for us to acquire these capacities by technological means.⁶

Let me clarify some options of general enhancement, according to Bostrom, whereby I will employ the notion of eugenics which he does not, but which I regard as appropriate.⁷ We have had examples of state regulated and liberal eugenics. State regulated eugenics is the type of eugenics present in the Third Reich, which is morally despicable, and which is regarded as something to avoid today by most, if not all serious, Western ethicists. Liberal eugenics, on the other hand, is being discussed today, as a morally legitimate possibility, and scholars such as Nicholas Agar (1998) are in favour of some acts associated with liberal eugenics. Transhumanists, as mentioned before, also regard liberal eugenics a morally legitimate way of enhancing human beings. Both state regulated and liberal eugenics, however, are heteronomous types of eugenics, which means that people decide about the enhancement of other people. In the case of state regulated eugenics, the state decides, whereas in the case of liberal eugenics, the parents have the right to decide what ought to be done to offspring. Transhumanists seem to identify a further type of eugenics which I suggest could be called autonomous eugenics. People may decide for themselves whether they wish to be transformed into posthumans by technological means. Given the theme in Bostrom's articles, this even seems to be the dominant way, he expects posthumans, "an exceedingly worthwhile type" (Bostrom forthcoming, 24), to come into existence.⁸

Given the above analysis of two concepts of the posthuman, I claim that Nietzsche's concept of higher humans and the overhuman is very similar to Esfandiary's concepts of the transhuman and the posthuman, but not to Bostrom's concepts. According to Nietzsche, individual members of the species of human beings have the capacity to develop only certain limited qualities. It is supposed to be characteristic of all species that their respective members can develop only within fixed limits. Given certain conditions, which Nietzsche does not specify, evolution can take place. According to Nietzsche, evolution is not a gradual development from one species to another, but takes place in steps. If the conditions within one species are such that an evolutionary step can take place, various couples at the same time give birth to members of a new species. The couples who give birth to the overhuman must have qualities that Nietzsche would refer to as those of higher humans. One of the conditions necessary for an evolutionary step to occur is that many higher humans exist. Normally, a higher human cannot simply transfer his outstanding capacities to his descendants. However, if there are many higher humans and some other conditions are present too, such an evolutionary step can occur (KSA, 13, 316-317).

Higher humans still belong to the human species, but have some special capacities which an overhuman could also have. However, higher humans cannot pass on their special capacities to their descendants by means of sexual reproduction. By chance, higher humans have the potential they have and, in addition, they must put significant effort into developing their various capacities. According to Nietzsche, Goethe represents the best example of a higher human (KSA, 6, 151-152). Nietzsche's higher humans are based upon a special nature that they have by chance. Their nature enables them to develop into higher humans, if they realise their potential by working hard at enhancing themselves. Hereby, he particularly stresses the development of intellectual capacities, the ability to interpret. Nietzsche does not refer to technological means of improvement – Bostrom is correct in that respect. However, Nietzsche does not exclude the additional possibility of technological enhancement either.

The overhuman has a significantly different potential from that of higher humans. So far no overhuman has existed, but the normal capacities of an overhuman are beyond the capacities even of a higher human. Like every species, the species of the overhuman has limits, but their limits are different from the limits of the human species. The overhuman comes about via an evolutionary step which originates from the group of higher humans. Nietzsche does not exclude the possibility that technological means bring about the evolutionary step. His comments concerning the conditions for the evolutionary step toward the overhuman are rather vague in general, but in this respect his attitude is similar to that of transhumanists. However, he thinks that the scientific spirit will govern the forthcoming millennia and that this spirit will bring about the end of the domination of dualist concepts of God and metaphysics, and the beginning of a wider plausibility for his way of thinking.

Given this brief characterisation of higher humans and the overhuman, I am bound to conclude that Nietzsche's higher humans are similar to Esfandiary's concept of the transhuman and that Nietzsche's overhuman bears many similarities to Esfandiary's posthuman. What can we say about Bostrom's concept of the posthuman in comparison to Nietzsche's concepts?

Bostrom holds: "One might well take an expansive view of what it means to be human, in which case 'posthuman' is to be understood as denoting a certain possible type of human mode of being" (Bostrom forthcoming, 24). Accordingly, he also holds that posthumans have capacities that cannot be found in living human beings. As Nietzsche defends that the species of human beings has strict limits, it is rather unlikely that the concept of a type of human being with capacities which have not yet existed is consistent with his philosophy. Consequently, we can conclude that Nietzsche and the transhumanists share many aspects in their general anthropologies and their values, but Nietzsche's concept of the overhuman does

not correspond to the concept of the posthuman of all transhumanists. However, there are transhumanists whose concept of the posthuman bears many significant similarities to that of Nietzsche's overhuman.

2 The Overhuman, and Nietzsche's Hope for the Future

Transhumanists, at least in the articles which I have consulted, have not explained why they hold the values they have, and why they want to bring about posthumans. Nietzsche, on the other hand, explains the relevance of the overhuman for his philosophy. The overhuman may even be the ultimate foundation for his worldview.

Nietzsche sees philosophers as creators of values, which are ultimately founded in personal prejudices.⁹ He regards his own prejudices as those that they correspond to the spirit which will govern the forthcoming centuries. "Spirit" here does not refer to an immaterial *nous* in the Platonic sense, or some ghostly spiritual substance. "Spirit" in Nietzsche's writing refers to a bodily capacity of interpretation by means of language, which is based upon physiological strength. He distinguishes between a religious and a scientific spirit. Weak reactive human beings, who cannot fulfil their wishes in the here and now, incorporate the religious spirit, which makes them long for a good afterlife. This spirit was dominant among human beings for a very long time. However, eventually human beings grew stronger and consequently more and more developed a scientific spirit. The importance of the scientific spirit has increased significantly, particularly since the Renaissance. Nietzsche expects this spirit to become even more dominant in the future. As his worldview is supposed to appeal to the scientific spirit, it is supposed to become more and more attractive to the people of the future.

According to Nietzsche, Plato can be seen as a representative of a philosophy based on the religious spirit, Nietzsche as representative of a philosophy based on the scientific one. Christianity which was dominant in Western countries for a very long time has to be regarded as Platonism for the people. It is Nietzsche's intention and need to turn Platonism upside down. He refers to his own philosophy as inverted Platonism. In the same way, as Christian thought has dominated many centuries, his scientific way of thinking is supposed to govern forthcoming centuries. Consequently, inverted versions of the main elements of Platonic-Christian thinking have to be found in Nietzsche's thought.

One central aspect of Christianity, according to Nietzsche, is the personal afterlife. It is what makes Christian thinking appealing to many people, and gives a sense of meaning to their lives. If my representation of Nietzsche's thought is correct, then an inverted version of the personal afterlife, or a

concept which gives meaning to the life of human beings, also has to be part of Nietzsche's thought. Here the overhuman comes in, together with another concept, the eternal recurrence – Nietzsche's theory of this-worldly salvation – with which I will not be concerned here, even though all these concepts are closely related to one another.

The overhuman represents the meaning of the earth. The overhuman is supposed to represent the meaning-giving concept within Nietzsche's worldview which is supposed to replace the basically Christian worldview. It is in the interest of higher humans to permanently overcome themselves. The ultimate kind of overcoming can be seen in the overcoming of the human species, and whoever has been keen on permanently overcoming himself can regard himself as an ancestor of the overhuman. In this way, the overhuman is supposed to give meaning to human beings. It is not a transcendent meaning but an earthy, immanent one which is appropriate for scientifically minded people who have abandoned their belief in an after world. As C. G. Jung stresses: "Man cannot stand a meaningless life."¹⁰ Nietzsche and Plato would agree. I suspect that the transhumanist concept of the posthuman cannot be fully appreciated, if one does not take the meaning-giving aspect into consideration, or if one wishes to exclude all references to quasi-religious concepts. Bostrom in a different context puts forward the following:

Many people who hold religious beliefs are already accustomed to the prospect of an extremely radical transformation into a kind of posthuman being, which is expected to take place after the termination of their current physical incarnation. Most of those who hold such a view also hold that the transformation could be very good for the person who is transformed. (Bostrom forthcoming, 16-17.)

I suspect that the value of the bringing about of the posthuman cannot be ultimately justified, except to an individual who believes that that the concept makes his life meaningful: "I wish to be the ancestor of a posthuman." I doubt that Bostrom agrees with this suspicion. He might fear a mixture of scientific and religious categories. I, on the other hand, think that it can make the concept of the posthuman stronger, if one accepts that it also has a meaning-giving function, which, in contrast to the Christian afterlife, is based upon scientific hopes, the importance of the world of the senses, and immanent goals. Nietzsche upheld that the concept of the overhuman is the meaning of the earth. I think that the relevance of the posthuman can only be fully appreciated if one acknowledges that its ultimate foundation is that it gives meaning to scientifically minded people. I do not think there is anything wrong or abominable about that.

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Notes

1. The British Nietzsche scholar Ansell-Pearson (1997) merely recognizes some similarities between Nietzsche and transhumanism.
2. In the following paragraphs, I summarise my reading of Nietzsche’s metaphysics of the will-to-power (Sorgner, 2007, 39-76).
3. See Sorgner 2007, 50.
4. Compare Babich 1994; Birx 2006, vol. 4, 1741-1745; Moore/Brobjer 2004.
5. “Let us suppose that you were to develop into a being that has posthuman healthspan and posthuman cognitive and emotional capacities” (Bostrom forthcoming, 5).
6. “We may note, however, that it is unlikely that we could in practice become posthuman other than via recourse to advanced technology” (Bostrom forthcoming, 22).
7. Compare Sorgner 2007, 53-58.
8. “It follows trivially from the definition of ‘posthuman’ given in this paper that we are not posthuman at the time of writing. It does not follow, at least not in any obvious way, that a posthuman could not also remain a human being. Whether or not this is so depends on what meaning we assign to the word ‘human’. One might well take an expansive view of what it means to be human, in which case ‘posthuman’ is to be understood as denoting a certain possible type of human mode of being – if I am right, an exceedingly worthwhile type.” (Bostrom forthcoming, 24.)
9. The following paragraphs are a summary of my reading of Nietzsche spelled out in detail in my monograph *Metaphysics without Truth* (2007).
10. Compare Stevens 1994, 126.

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