
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Posthuman Nietzsche?

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| ABSTRACT

Through a close analysis of what Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, designates as the “four errors” of humanity, this chapter proposes to rethink the theory of the “three axes of anthropocentrism” as a bifurcation: on the one hand the superhuman, also intended as a conceptual ancestor of what we now call the transhuman; and the posthuman on the other, as the philosophical figure of humanity in its post-anthropocentric designation, here defended on the grounds of its theoretical assumptions and practical implications.

| KEYWORDS

Nietzsche, Friedrich, super, post and transhuman, postanthropocentrism, animality, Thoreau, Henry David

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1. Introduction

‘We are all *afraid* of the truth...’¹
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

The four errors. – Man has been educated by his errors: first, he saw himself only incompletely; secondly, he endowed himself with fictitious attributes; thirdly, he placed himself in a false rank order in relation to animals and nature; fourthly, he invented ever new tables of goods and for a time took them to be eternal and unconditioned – so that now this, now that human drive and condition occupied first place and was ennobled as a result of this valuation. If one discounts the effect of these four errors, one has also discounted humanity, humaneness, and ‘human dignity’.²

This chapter is little more than an in-depth analysis of Nietzsche’s aphorism: every error is itself a further reevaluation.³ Its furthering is an artery in what – in the wake of Jean-François Lyotard’s postmodern attempt – is here defined as ‘the posthuman condition’. Some preliminary clarifications are, however, in order. These concern the complex relationship maintained with Nietzsche in these pages. During my studies for this chapter, it did strike me, at times, that Nietzsche was indeed the dangerous man discerned by many others: *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) – not to mention *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) – are manifestos for discrimination, racial superiority, abuse

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are* [1908], in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley, ed. and trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; repr. 2006), pp. 69–152 (p. 92).

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* [1882], ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; repr. 2007), p. 114.

³ A first, tentative version of this text can be found in Leonardo Caffo, *Del destino umano. Nietzsche e i quattro errori dell’umanità* (Prato: Piano B, 2016).

of power, and classism. The ways in which Nietzsche is connected to Nazism is, in this sense, simpler to understand than the endeavours to purge him of these connections, which merely allow for a partial vision of his thought to emerge. A less violent version, perhaps (think of the attraction Nietzsche has exerted on European socialism), as well as a less metaphysically dangerous one. Then why the need for another chapter that explores the posthuman through Nietzsche? For the simple reason that Nietzsche, I contend, actually contains within himself all the necessary conditions for the construction of a figure both identical and antithetical to that of the superhuman (*Übermensch*); and that the recovery of animality (think of the famous image of the predatory bird devouring the lamb, or the struggle against sublimation as repression of natural instincts) can in fact bring about a seemingly inconceivable scenario which is paradoxically consequential to Nietzsche's philosophy.

The superhuman, as is well-known, is always defined figuratively; an analytical designation of the concept of superhumanism, excepting the few vain attempts in *Ecce Homo* (1908), is nowhere to be found in Nietzsche's work. Then again, this can hardly be expected of a man who stated that "only something which has no history can be defined".⁴ Of course this is not to suggest that a reconstruction of Nietzschean superhumanism is not possible. Through an analysis of the various texts with their problematisation of the death of God, or their critique of asceticism as a perverse exercise of the will to power (*Wille zur Macht*), we can in fact trace the profile of a human being who moves *beyond good and evil*, creates new values, and triumphs over weakness. There is a sense in which the Nietzschean figure could also be said to come to a world reminiscent of the hymn to life as absolute potentiality. The *opposite* of the superhuman, which originates in the same genealogical work conducted by Nietzsche, is the posthuman. It contains a refusal to undertake the *ride of the Valkyries* without this however resulting in a refusal of life (one of the most important ideas being explored here) or edging towards the *homo sacer* predicament outlined by Giorgio Agamben. Not unlike other philosophers of history, Nietzsche masterfully deconstructs the causes of a problem without however remotely discerning or addressing the effects that follow from them.⁵ This is a problematic subsumption of effects which recurs in many thinkers, from Foucault to Heidegger, in turn justifying the premise of this chapter: to take Nietzsche as our point of departure, seeing as his examination of where we come from remains valid; only that it falls to us to understand which direction to take thereafter.

When Nietzsche refers to the weak and the strong he does not confine his argument within the dichotomy human/animal: even the weakest of human beings, identified as the slave, as per Nietzsche's genealogical process, has to succumb to the mighty, identified as the warrior. Were we to adopt the regulatory ideal inherent in the superhuman, then, we would have to accept a model of society that turns diversity into a *fact* on which to institute specific values – in this case, the strongest as the rulers of the weakest. Nietzsche thus proves to be the most misguided user of the naturalistic fallacy known to the history of philosophy: moving from 'being' to 'what one should be' is logical for Nietzsche, as logical, at any rate, as it has been deemed illogical. He is notoriously averse to standard logic: *The Gay Science* (1882) is replete with reflections against logicians, who work to denature that which in human existence is illogical, reducing complexity to the level of formula. It is not, however, the lack of argumentation, in Nietzsche, that raises serious issues but, rather, the nefarious outcomes of his hypothesised scenarios. The superhuman divides humanity, both biologically and culturally, in *Homo Sapiens A* and *Homo Sapiens B*, with the result that *Homo Sapiens A's* rights are derived directly from the devastation of the rights of *Homo Sapiens B*.

And yet aphorism 115 is the prelude to a radically different formulation of the superhuman, which we shall here attempt to tentatively trace and defend. At present, the posthuman is a somewhat muddled concept, and can mean disparate things. Its general delineation, however, will allow us to put some order into disorder and understand why it is that going back to Nietzsche is an intuitive move. Let me start with the provisional definition of the posthuman condition: The posthuman is an idea of humanity as no longer closed in on itself but seeking, rather, to be 'open'. Human beings are in ontological continuity with animals and nature, and do not occupy a special place in the world. They tend to modify themselves and hybridise with their own technological products, thereby altering their

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* [1887], ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; repr. 2007), p. 53.

⁵ On this point, see Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* [1965] (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

predicates (radically) and their essence (partially). The posthuman is an *open work*⁶ and is opposed in its principles and parameters to the humanist notion of humanity as a *closed work*.⁷

The posthuman shares with the Nietzschean superhuman the absence of a qualitative dimension in relation to the current prototype of humanity. In *Ecce Homo* – amidst the continuous complaints about his own limited popularity – Nietzsche writes: “The last thing I would promise would be to ‘improve’ humanity. I won’t be setting up any new idols; let the old ones learn what it means to have feet of clay”.⁸ It is not, then, a matter of establishing an external model of sorts designed to regulate the lives of human beings. In this respect, Nietzsche’s critique of asceticism, and the paradoxical exercising of the will to power, remain solid reference points in my own analysis. In a sense, this also rests on a more complex critique of the dichotomy pure/impure which actually denote socially and theologically constructed categories, as Nietzsche shows in Book II of *On the Genealogy of Morality*. On the myth of purity Nietzsche inaugurates a philosophical critique which reaches its apex in Jacques Derrida, also traversing Michel Foucault, namely that acting morally does not mean being pure. The overlapping of categories in fact causes short-circuits. Nevertheless the Nietzsche of *Ecce Homo* hones in on a crucial point which transforms the theoretical search for humanity’s future into a moral search: “A god who descends to earth should *only* do wrong – it is not divine to take the punishment upon yourself – it is divine to take on the *guilt*”.⁹ Which, not in any overly critical way, means tracing the evolution of humanity through two fundamental philosophical threads: (1) the ability to disobey; (2) the shifting of the moral axis from effects to causes. There is, in fact, a strong connection, very little explored, between Nietzsche and the American transcendentalists, especially Henry David Thoreau (remarked on further later in this chapter). Some of the issues I shall be exploring, in this respect, include social critique and the recovery of nature in human artificial life, as well as the act of disobeying authorities, in a kind of morality which is not merely based on descriptions. But the focal point that, as I see it, allows us to transition from the superhuman to the posthuman is the continuous search for the animal dimension, through which Nietzsche deconstructs humanity. His critique of Socrates, typical of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871), comes down to this: instincts cannot fully succumb to reason. This calls for an alternative understanding of humanity which looks to Leibniz’s *analogon rationis*.¹⁰ As Nietzsche himself declares when commenting on Baruch Spinoza’s legacy, it is a matter of reuniting the human and Nature (with the capital ‘N’ typical of pantheism), for there is no missing link between us and the monkey, as falsely transmitted by a certain Christian vulgate of Darwinism.

The posthuman is thus the positive alternative to the superhuman. It is also the only form of human life possible for the life to come. The transvaluation of values contested by Nietzsche, in fact, cannot but give way to a more positively accommodating kind of humanity. What we have with and through Nietzsche are two possible alternatives: superhuman destruction or posthuman creation. This is to say that what we have to do now is to try to move from an analysis of causes to a theory of effects. In the words of Maurizio Ferraris, it is about *reconstructing deconstruction*, about making the effort to trace a theory of the time to come (*l’avvenire*).¹¹ Jacques Derrida, one of Nietzsche’s most critical readers, claimed that the time to come belongs to ghosts. It belongs to the images of those who are no longer, images that continue to be reflected back, as on a cinema screen, in perpetual and uniform motion. This is because the time to come is not the future but, rather, a space of *possible* becoming. It is that which requires work, planning, philosophising. Human beings are animals. They reinvent and project themselves into a different world co-extensive with the time to come. It is in this context that Nietzsche’s four errors (cf. the epigraph) carve out their own space for renewed significance. Erring is human, as human as it is to attempt to ‘straighten the aim’.

⁶ This refers to Umberto Eco’s conceptualisation of the ‘open work’ as being in constant development and continuously reinterpreted, with the result that previously un contemplated meanings keep being generated. See *The Open Work* [1962], trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁷ Consider Nietzsche’s insightful comment, in this regard: “Becoming what you are presupposes that you do not have the slightest idea *what* you are” (*Ecce Homo*, p. 96).

⁸ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p. 71.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁰ Cf. Maurizio Ferraris, Pietro Kobau, *Analogon Rationis* (Milan: Cuem, 1994).

¹¹ *Translator’s Note*: In the absence of a word, in the English language, that presents a productive counterpoint to ‘future’ and renders the conceptual nuances of the Italian ‘avvenire’, this translation resorts to the phrase ‘time to come’. In so doing, it necessarily takes on the conceptual implications linked to the use of ‘to come’ in philosophy and theory.

But there is another option, namely that of giving a different reading to the emblematically Nietzschean genealogy of decadence prevalent between the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. It is about reconsidering the principles and parameters of anthropocentrism, thereby making way for the Nietzsche who takes after Spinoza but insufficiently engages with his '*deus sive natura*'. The opposition good/evil is hereby substituted by that of the strong/the weak, which becomes prominent in the latter phase of Nietzsche's thinking as well as his unfinished work, *The Will to Power*.¹² The century we are now inhabiting cannot but strive for a different structuring of the Nietzschean will to power directed towards a radical reconstruction of our conception of humanity. These, then, are the prolegomena to the idea of 'what we should be' on the basis of 'what we are', for the risk is that – instead of the Nietzschean ideal of the superhuman – we are offered, as a consolation of sorts, that of the *everyman*.¹³

2. Humanity as Incomplete

The first of the four errors denounced by Nietzsche in his aphorism 115 of *The Gay Science* concerns our presumed incompleteness. We find ourselves within the parameters of the myth of Prometheus: insofar as it is lacking in a defining quality, humanity endeavours to complete itself with the assistance of *techne*, God, or other parts of the 'outside world'. Friedrich Nietzsche forcefully opposed this idea, attributing its various articulations to the erroneous transvaluation of values effected across history: from Socrates to Christianity. Being incomplete, in Nietzsche's perspective, means being constantly subject to that relation of credit/debt (articulated in Book II of *On the Genealogy of Morality*) which precludes human beings from enjoying and enhancing their potentiality, and sees them perpetually relying on the outside. This relation, in fact, continues to govern our societies to this day, as indicated by the leading role progressively assumed by the economy. The incomplete human is a protagonist in the theatre of 'negative nihilism', because the death of God announced by Zarathustra is not received as an incentive to look constructively to oneself so much as a justification for the creation of new gods, with science, in this sense, being no less dangerous than religion. Incompleteness, then, is itself the invention of a certain kind of political, religious, economical system which aims to limit human beings' free exercise of their will to power. In Nietzsche, this form of violence is perpetrated against aristocrats: in his vision, as also that of Schopenhauer – not, however, that of Wagner – the repressive quality implicit in the bourgeoisie of their day becomes a recurring theme.

Human incompleteness is an idea that characterised Renaissance humanism. It calls for a 'linear' conception of time. Of course, even Christianity or Judaism have their own physics. Their notion of time proceeds from point A to point B, as in the below image, and designates a mode of existence comprised of objectives and achievements, often dependent on the past. At the same time, they postulate that another dimension of existence awaits, after the end of ordinary time (redemption in the afterlife, in its various theological forms).



Towards the construction of the superhuman, Nietzsche resorts instead to a conception of time that does not involve an afterlife. In order to complete its objectives, the figure of the superhuman requires, rather, a here-and-now that immanently provides the necessary conditions for its realisation. By adapting Jerome Blanqui's conception of time as 'cycle', Nietzsche goes on to develop the theory of 'eternal return', whereby every moment is designated as repetition.¹⁴ Although he maintains the structure of difference,¹⁵ time, in conflict with the idea of free will, becomes a continual recurrence of what has already been done and said, and what has already happened. The role

¹² The fragments of this text were posthumously organised by his sister Elisabeth and Peter Gast, and then published in 1901.

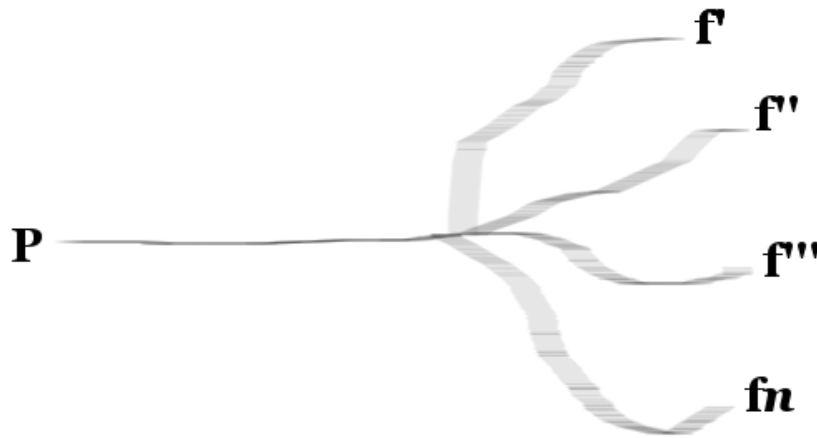
¹³ Cf. Umberto Eco, "The Phenomenology of Mike Bongiorno" [1963], in: *Misreadings*, trans. William Weaver (London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1993), pp. 156–164.

¹⁴ On the relation between Blanqui and Nietzsche's conceptualisation of the eternal return, see Tiziana Andina, "Eterno Ritorno: Nietzsche, Blanqui e la cosmologia del Big Bang", *Rivista di estetica* 17 (2001): 3–36.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze famously remarks on the matter in his *Difference and Repetition* [1968], trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

of human beings is to turn this to good use; to strive to exercise their will to power to the full, in the understanding that their enjoyment of life needs nothing else. One of the primary questions raised by Nietzsche's first error, in fact, concerns the conception of time required by human beings. Christians, who are characterised by Nietzsche as slaves (weak and lacking virtue) and who are elevated to the role of Good Samaritans, live out their lives according to small objectives, in anticipation of redemption. This refers to the promise that 'the last shall be the first', in an undefined 'after' posited by a drastic transvaluation, as Nietzsche suggests, whereby any relationship between the Apollonian and Dionysian is interrupted. The superhuman originates in that flash of inspiration experienced by Nietzsche on the 14th of August 1881, at Lake Silvaplana, which gives rise to the concept of eternal return. The idea that all is repetition does not mean that we will step in the same river twice, but there is a sense in which our main objective necessarily becomes that of enjoying the moment in which we are immersed.

It is in this respect that the potential of the posthuman despite all the misconceptions surrounding it is unquestionable. The conception of time which serves as its theoretical backdrop is undoubtedly that of contingent futures, as explored by Severino Boezio and contemporary theorists of possible worlds. Consider, first, the below figure.



If linear time is evidently marked by anthropocentrism, which is one of the fundamental points of contention of the posthuman, cyclical time is actually no less so, either. Life is a system of choices, and must be perceived as such. This first detachment from the Nietzschean superhuman, however, does not lead back to Christian linearity and its tendency towards the afterlife. The core argument being advanced here actually originates in Nietzsche's idea that human beings are essentially will to power, which means they choose to do one thing over another. As we shall see, the posthuman condition depends on the reasons for which specific choices are made. In the case of Nietzsche's eternal return, the choice is clear: if all has already been, then all has already been chosen. The freedom to act, however, has to characterise the space for a future form of humanity – and this notwithstanding the limitations posed by the various systems in which entities move.¹⁶

According to Nietzsche, the idea of incompleteness as inherent in human essence is gradually constructed in the course of transvaluation: the rulers of the world were aware of their absolute power, but they were deceived by priests, said to be in league with slaves and their resentment. In the glossary of works drafted in *Ecce Homo* by Nietzsche himself, *On the Genealogy of Morality* is defined as a priest's philosophy. Theology, particularly in its western formulation, would in fact appear to constitute the primary cause for the emptying of human essence. According to the Christian narrative, human beings need God and the mediation of the Church in its various forms. Overstating the rulers' impurity, priests succeed in bringing about the very worst nightmare of classist Nietzsche:

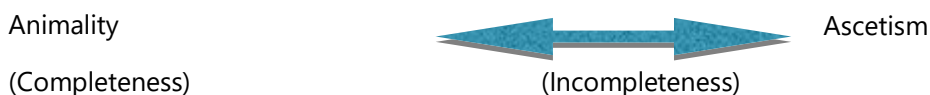
¹⁶ I discuss these limitations in Leonardo Caffo, *Azioni e natura umana* (Rimini: Fara Editore, 2011).

the morality of the common prevails.¹⁷ If we look past his outdated value judgements, the genealogical process of a reconstruction of the history of domination becomes an invitation to consider the causes of a phenomenon. They come to understand that there are no limits to the possibility of change, where that part of the world constructed by humans is concerned. Going beyond good and evil, in fact, can take on various meanings, and Nietzsche, in the last part of his life, when he abandoned antisemitism; yet developed an anomalous passion for Jewish bankers (by him considered to be the only form of human life truly full of will to power, appears to be advancing the idea of a *weak theory of morality*.

According to this idea, good and evil in contemporary societies are more often than not socially constructed as a way of exerting control over individuals, thereby inducing them to satisfy worthless needs designed to deprive them of their will to power. This is very different from Nietzsche's strong theory of morality, according to which good and evil are to be substituted by the weak and the strong. It is amenable to the construction of the posthuman as it is being delineated here. On his part, convinced as he was of being the heir of Polish nobles, Nietzsche focuses his analysis entirely on the suffering of aristocrats. Suffering, in his view, is forced upon the strong and courageous (the 'gentle hearts') by mediocrity. Not to mention that Nietzsche's superhuman is not only rich and powerful but also, and above all, male. His misogynistic perception of women is hard to countenance, and reaches far beyond the spirit of his age. Even if we do not set much store by his various amorous disappointments there is the fact that, for Nietzsche, the female represents weakness and inferiority. His highly celebrated 'blond beast' could only really be male. When attempting to glean what is important in his work, we should not lose sight of the fact that, politically, his positions were undeniably reactionary (largely absurd, even). If we refuse to accept the widely discussed theory that he had always been insane then we would have to, at the very least, open ourselves to the idea that he could be terribly short-sighted in his reasoning.

For Nietzsche, the phrase 'our species', as anticipated in the introduction, takes on different implications: there is, for him, a superior and an inferior species of *Sapiens*. Values (be they of slaves or nobles) are derived from nature; that is, they are facts. While nobody today would take such claims seriously – partly due to their naturalistic fallacy as well as their connections with eugenics – their importance in this context cannot be overestimated, not least because Nietzsche makes use of them in his close consideration of animality.

Nietzsche's conception of animality is often sought in the comparison between human beings and the predatory bird that kills the lamb. Philosophically, this is a decisive moment as regards to human incompleteness, because it allows us to reconstruct Nietzsche's response to Prometheus. All animals possess distinctive qualities, says the myth, except for human beings, who are thus forced to resort, by necessity, to the invention of fire. The absence of a distinctive mark is that which, in the words of Giorgio Agamben, points to humanity's state of being not so much without quality but, rather, *without content*.¹⁸ It is in this sense that humanism tends towards negative nihilism: we need external references, substitutes for God, in order to give meaning to our existence. The predatory bird's killing of the lamb denotes the total and unmediated exercising of the will to power. Human beings who hold themselves back from what they can in fact naturally do, on the other hand, cause its absolute cessation: the mechanisms of will break down in the face of asceticism. Notwithstanding that Nietzsche confuses facts with values, what emerges is a way of approaching the idea of human incompleteness that is worth probing, here synthesised through the polarisation of two antithetical entities:



¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 34.

¹⁸ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content* [1970], trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

For Nietzsche, the animal represents absolute completeness; it does not imply the generic concept also denounced by Jacques Derrida in his *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2006) but, rather, a singular specificity of life. Studied in the light of his well-known perspectivism, animality comes to represent, in Nietzsche, the realisation of a world that is not self-limiting. Despite being a critical reader of Nietzsche, Heidegger fails to grasp this aspect of his work, which here allows us to establish another point of intersection between the superhuman and the posthuman. Animality is the continuous horizon of Nietzsche's thought, and has positive connotations. His critical point of reference is Descartes, whom he viewed negatively, as well as the entire tradition of classical Cartesianism. Descartes, as is well-known, is the creator of a historical break between us and the rest of the living world. But the dichotomy *res cogitans/res extensa* is only one of the causes of the so-called Cartesian dualism. In his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1647), the philosopher claims that animals are automatons. He compares them to broken clocks, unworthy of being perceived as individuals because devoid of language. Ontology, then, has to classify them as objects, rather than subjects. His argument, today, is entirely rejected.¹⁹ However, what is interesting to consider, in this context, is that Nietzsche chooses to take a different departure from Cartesian dualism because, in his view, animality represents the regulatory ideal for humanity, in opposition to what the transvaluation of all values makes of it.

Towards the construction of the posthuman, I shall now begin to hybridise Nietzsche with other thinkers. As anticipated in the introduction, Nietzsche (1844–1900) presents unexpected points of intersection with Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) and, in a general sense, with American transcendentalists. Unexpected, of course, until one discovers that Nietzsche was an avid reader of Thoreau's master, Emerson. Animality and nature constitute the two entities, in relation to humanity's supposed incompleteness, which allow for a sustained parallelism. These entities, moreover, act as the non-technological basis on which one of the fundamental hybridisations of the posthuman condition is founded. Having a positive vision of nature was in and of itself a rather daring move, in a time marked by Hegelian idealism. The idea that something in nature is lacking makes no sense. One of Karl Marx's aphorisms comes to mind: "From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs".²⁰ While paradoxically deficient within the social sphere for which it is formulated, Marx's aphorism proves to be, as I see it, very apt in relation to 'the things of nature'. Thinking, for instance, that the eagle is flawed because it does not swim, or the puffer fish incomplete because it does not know how to fly, does not make any sense. According to Nietzsche and Thoreau, this also applies to humanity, which, as it turns out, actually possesses all that is required for it to be able to live a complete and decent life. However, the myth of incompleteness cannot be readily dismissed. 'Feeling incomplete', as the verb denotes, is a spiritual condition, or, in more current terms, a state of mind. Although Nietzsche does make comparisons with animals, in that they are able to follow their own nature, he does not realise that, as psychologically complex animals, human beings experience a kind of psychological melancholy which leads to improvement, precisely on the basis of that sensation of incompleteness. The shift to the posthuman from the superhuman 'blond beast', who looks to animality purely as a way of acting on our instincts, requires us to deal with the sensation of incompleteness in a radically different way. Thoreau makes similar suggestions, through some of his reflections on animality, which take on the quality of a quasi-romantic contemplation of diversity. His biannual retreat at Walden Pond (from 1845, when he was twenty-eight, to 1847) was in fact an attempt to reconnect with nature.

For Nietzsche, the idea of human incompleteness as a cultural construct originates in the Christian interpretation of an economic principle (credit/debt). Thoreau, on his part, attributes it to the politics of the US government of his day. For both philosophers, incompleteness leads to a deleterious relationship of dependence on the socio-economic system; a certain mode of thinking, therefore, which is integrated into the way we inhabit the world. Before Nietzsche, Thoreau was himself deeply convinced that this mode of dependence is specifically constructed to limit our freedom. Insofar as they are 'naturally free', animals represent the regulatory ideal for a human (re)turn to

¹⁹ For an analysis of this theme, see Domenica Bruni, Leonardo Caffo, "Can You Speak? Well, Are You Moral?", *Methodo – Analytic Perspectives* 2.3 (2014): 50–57.

²⁰ Various reiterations of this are found in Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* [1875], ed. and trans. Kevin B. Anderson and Karel Ludenhoff (New York: PM Press, 2023), pp. 16–18.

that modality of living.²¹ The distinction between the posthuman and the superhuman thus lies in their different response to incompleteness: while the latter implies its negation, the former is committed to developing constructive ways of handling, and therefore *living with it*.

Leonardo Da Vinci's "The Vitruvian Man" (c. 1490) is far more than a geometric principle: it presents a model of life. Elected as the one and only model, the human becomes, by extension, the model of nature. What Nietzsche has in mind, in this sense, is the idea of ever-returning forms of anthropocentrism. In an attempt to restore some balance, he resorts in fact to the *Antichrist* (1895), the equivalent of which, today, would probably be that of the anti-west.²² The paradox of incompleteness resolves itself in an over-colonisation of that which we do not possess, with anthropocentrism thus leading to the centralisation of the other (to the point of elimination), under the pretext of safeguarding what is 'ours'. Where incompleteness becomes subordinated to the assertion of power, under the aegis of credit/debt, the Nietzschean strategy for handling incompleteness clearly takes a negative turn. From a posthuman perspective, conversely, incompleteness postulates a positive relation to the outside: humanity is an entity in the process of becoming; the tension between animality and technology. In a contemporary rehashing of the diatribe between nature/culture, animality is often seen as irreconcilable to technology. Nothing could be more wrong. However, reframing this idea means correcting it in the direction of the posthuman. It is not a matter of repropounding the well-known but highly debatable theory of the 'extended mind', whereby my iPhone not only enhances my mind but actually becomes part of it. It is, rather, about breaking through the mirrored glass that encases humanity, closing it off from the rest of the world. Nietzsche sought to open up this glass wall around the human, by eliminating God from his system of reference: 'God is dead' points to the new, scientific mode of thinking, which invalidates the hypothesis of the maker's centrality in establishing theories of physics and cosmology. But, what is there beyond the glass wall?

3. Humanity as Fictitious

The second error concerns the idea we have of our species, which leads to Nietzsche's lifelong obsession with the disparity he discerns between reality and fantasy. As we shall see, his idea of fictitious qualities implicates both rationality and the transcendental, faith and compassion. From *The Birth of Tragedy* to *On the Genealogy of Morality*, the philosopher grapples with the idea of bringing humanity down to earth again, in direct opposition to the human imaginary established by (secular) religions and philosophies. In our own pursuit of the posthuman, we begin by considering whether:

- 1) imagining oneself differently is in itself a problem;
- 2) Nietzsche himself, in fact, has his own personal idea of humanity.

The answer to the second point is of course a rhetorical 'yes', which means that Nietzsche is actually taking issue with a *certain* type of human ideation. He himself, then, aspired to effect a transvaluation of values; to the actualisation of *his* imagination. In this sense, Nietzsche is undoubtedly a utopian.

The first point likewise presents a rhetorical question. If, on the one hand, Nietzsche works to uncover false imaginations of humanity, it is also true, on the other, that the idea of the superhuman is itself an image of oneself tending towards the transcendence of reality. *How* exactly are we then to imagine ourselves? This is the question posed by the posthuman, as it is here being reconstructed through Nietzsche. There is no denying that humanity will continue to live in and project itself into an ever-changing *elsewhere*, in complex tension to its real *where*. First of all, where nature is concerned: through their body made of flesh, human beings share their condition of transience and mortality with all other living beings. The posthuman, however, also implies imagination in the obvious sense that it contemplates a future space; a here-and-now extending towards an 'after'. But what kind of 'after'? Nietzsche claims that the (r)evaluation of the four errors would lead to the end of humanism as we know it. But how can the posthuman actualise (and correct) the superhuman's explosive potential? In the words of Roberto Marchesini, hybridisation allows for "new declinations of humanity ... elements that restructure innate qualities; not

²¹ Let us here momentarily put aside the fact that this freedom is then taken away from nonhuman animals by human societies. Cf. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* [1975] (London: Harper Perennial, 2009).

²² For a noteworthy fictional parallel, in this sense, see Tiziano Terzani's analyses in his *A Fortune-Teller Told Me* [1995] (London: Flamingo, 1998).

in exhaustive terms but, rather, as a point of origin completed in a plurality of endings".²³ If the superhuman is self-sufficient, the posthuman, conversely, can never be so. For the self is in a constant process of becoming, not through the blind anchoring of negative nihilism, but, rather, through the power of hybridisation as a positive and regulatory ideal. Our entire history is an imagination of hybrids through which we thought ourselves into being. Minotaurs and centaurs, rather than mermaids, become prolegomena for posthuman imagination. In genetics, hybridisation is the process through which species or varieties intersect with all kinds of animal and plant families (*taxa*). In Nietzsche, the superhuman is already a hybrid of sorts, containing "every name in history".²⁴ The superhuman remains, however, an independent figure, divorced from its environments and from genetics, rendering itself, as it were, through twentieth-century dictators. Posthuman hybridisation, on the other hand, implies a *Homo Sapiens* without specific shades or limitations, borders or closures, ethnicities or genders.

Almost anticipating Richard Dawkins and other evolutionary biologists, Nietzsche transforms egoism into an absolute: standing in the way of the superhuman means unleashing its violence. However, there is another story that can be traced back to Nietzsche's second error, on the basis of his critique, namely the story of the superman, characterised by the tendency for reinvention through multimodality and polymorphism. As the superhuman has found nefarious examples of validation, the posthuman too is beginning to find its way into our species. In the absence of exclusive content and in the acquired realisation that they share both language and a mental life with extraspecies, human beings come to resemble empty boxes, waiting to be filled. But what is it that should fill them?

The opening up of the concept of 'humanity' does not in actual fact lead to our total dissolution. Nietzsche's superhuman could tread on the corpses of his kind – the weaker ones – but not on his own body. This is to say that there really is no extinctionism in the hypotheses of humanity's futures. Hence the posthuman, which risks turning, more often than not, into transhumanism, where the aim is that of overcoming all biological limitations with the aid of technology. In this way, the body, core axis of posthumanist philosophy, becomes (newly) relegated to the end-goal of its overcoming; to the promise of immortality and the artificial extension of life expectancy as a disavowal of all that which our very being – as lumps of flesh – actually communicates to us. The body is, to say it with Gilles Deleuze and Carmelo Bene (both keen readers of Nietzsche), the theatre of life, without which there is no life: existence becomes distorted by an idea of self-surpassing that resembles, really and truly, another form of death; a death under a false name. Whether or not we become a computer, it is, nonetheless, to death we shall return. The idea we have of ourselves *remains* an image of 'us', and not of an elsewhere or other.

4. Humanity as Other to Nature

The third error is central: the misconception that humanity is superior to all other living beings and thus belongs to a different ontology. Nietzsche is a living manifesto for the animality of human beings. In Western culture, not even Spinoza had reintegrated our species into the fabric of natural reality with the same force manifested by Nietzsche. This seemingly reductionist mechanism is in reality a celebration of human life. But what do we mean by this? The philosophical tradition preceding Nietzsche – but also the one that came after him, if we think again of Heidegger, for instance – worked to distinguish humanity qualitatively: in the search for predicates that would indicate humanity's exceptionality, this tradition gestured towards a static ontology, ethereal and eternal. In this way, humanity is systematically relegated to certain categories: language in Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*; death and being-towards-death, in Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1983);²⁵ self-consciousness in Hegel's monumental *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), and so forth. The problem, in Nietzsche, does not present itself as a zeroing of distinctions because it is obvious – in contrast with recent philosophies on indistinction²⁶ – that all living beings are different from one another. Difference, however, is negotiated according to sets of predicates that, even when identified and assessed, prove to be insufficient for the establishment of any kind of hierarchy.

²³ The original can be found in Roberto Marchesini, *Post-human: verso nuovi modelli di esistenza* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002), p. 159.

²⁴ Nietzsche writes these words in a letter to the Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt dated 5th January 1889. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Cambridge MA: Hackett Publishing, 1996), p. 346.

²⁵ On the conceptualisation of death in relation to Heidegger's work, see Leonardo Caffo, "Chi muore e chi no", *Animal Studies: rivista italiana di antropologia animale* 3 (2013): 39 - 41.

²⁶ Cf. Matthew Calarco, "Identity, Difference, Indistinction", *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11.2 (2011): 41–60.

The third error points towards a critique of humanity's false hierarchical position vis-à-vis animals and nature. Nietzsche looks to animals in order to understand the ways in which human beings ought to exercise their will to power. Superhumanism, then, denotes humanity's rediscovered animality. Nietzsche's transcendence is turned inwards not outwards: the future-oriented will to power, that is, must be sought in the roots of human existence, rather than in a metaphysically imagined or constructed elsewhere. This is the fundamental point of intersection between the superhuman and the posthuman. The search for animality or human corporeality is both complex and wide-ranging. The posthuman essentially aims to demolish anthropocentrism and thus carries its critique into the parameters of Animal Studies: a line stretched between three polarities which should be distinguished and briefly analysed separately before being reconsidered as a whole (cf. the following table):

Animal Studies:	Animal Cognition	Philosophy – Animality	Animal Ethics
Main Discipline	Science	Philosophy (ontology)	Politics (regulatory issues)
Questions	What can nonhuman animals do?	What is animality? What does it mean to be animals?	Do animals have rights? What are the arguments in favour of animal liberation?

The three polarities of Animal Studies – Animal Cognition, Philosophy of Animality, and Animal Ethics – pose very different questions and in turn constitute complex fields of study. Animal Studies emerge from these different disciplines, and build upon their various and respective gleanings and findings, towards the consideration of the question of animality. The schema serves to avoid any confusion and, above all, to frame in preliminary terms the different questions raised by this field, as well as their relevance to the posthuman. Superhumanism is only really interested in the middle column: more specifically, in dynamic ontology, made possible by the destruction of the boundaries between humans and animals (or, worse still, between humans and 'the animal', in the abhorrent singular, to echo Derrida once more). If well-reasoned, the posthuman, on the other hand, looks concomitantly to all three columns, transforming them into one strong pillar emblematic of its defining assumptions and values. Beyond hierarchies and their parameters, what emerges is a world in which every living creature – human or animal – constitutes a powerful and singular universe. The end of hierarchy, as denounced by Nietzsche's third error, has to be able to lead to a renewed ethics of coexistence between heterospecific entities. Let us, however, for the time being, go back to the core issue, namely that of anthropocentrism.

Anthropocentrism is essentially articulated on three axes:

- 1) theological;
- 2) scientific;
- 3) moral.

The Copernican revolution and Darwinism constitute a close confrontation with the first two points. While it is arguably the case that Darwin has not been read extensively enough, there is a general consensus about the continuities that bind all animals, including human beings. And yet anthropocentrism, as Nietzsche notes, remains very much integral to the ethos of his time, and, one could argue, is even more so today. This phenomenon, which perplexed Nietzsche, becomes absolutely clear in the context of the posthuman. This is connected with the third point indicated in the framing of anthropocentrism: irrespective of their position in the universe, human beings do not renounce their supremacy over all the other living beings on planet earth, justifying this through various claims. If the superhuman, in this sense, chooses to posit humanity's becoming through a modality of negation that is closed in on itself, the posthuman, conversely, postulates openness. Its radically antithetical positioning places entities on the same ethical plane precisely because they distribute themselves along different planes of reality.

Humanity as other to nature cannot take the form of a sinister exercising of the former's will to power, aimed at a confrontation with some kind of 'wild animal'. Nietzsche's own error, in turn, lies in his failure to understand that intrinsic to *our* nature there are moral categories through which we filter reality. In contrast with a certain kind of evolutionary biology prevalent in the seventies, there is the now largely accepted assumption, both in genetics and philosophy, that human beings are firstly moral animals, and only then social animals. This is not to suggest that human beings are naturally good: morality is a neutral condition, articulated in a second moment. What it does mean, however, is that human beings possess a biological attribute that leads them to evaluate their actions in ethical terms – this is the syntax of our actions.²⁷ Anthropocentrism must, then, be deactivated and reframed through the posthuman answer to the three points we have just presented.

Consider the following:

Speciesism – **Ethics** – Antispeciesism

Hermeneutics (Ptolemy) – **Ontology** – Realism (Copernicus)

Creationism – **Science** – Darwinism

The polar oppositions constitute, respectively, the cardinal points of classical humanism and their opposites. It is not strictly necessary to reject humanism *tout court* but, more specifically, that kind of humanism against which Nietzsche establishes his critique. Speciesism, an excessive use of hermeneutics and creationism (of religious origin) constitute the core causes of the third error.

Nietzsche's obsession with the superhuman has some illustrious ancestors: from Søren Kierkegaard's self-sufficient 'single individual' who goes as far as renouncing amorous commitments for the sake of true living, to Max Stirner's theorisation of the 'ego' or the 'unique individual'. The various concerted efforts to overcome the crisis of the subject essentially intersect in Nietzsche. The reason why 'overman' is often preferred to 'superhuman' is that according to some – Giorgio Vattimo is explicit in this respect²⁸ – there is no inherent violence in Nietzsche's theorisation of (future) humanity. If 'superhuman' suggests oppression (it certainly designates a dominating power) 'overman' appears to proclaim, rather, humanity's positive overcoming (the idea of going beyond one's own condition). As I see it, however, this interpretation is yet another vain attempt to save Nietzsche from himself. The overman actually resides in the posthuman, born of Nietzsche's four errors, rather than in Nietzsche himself. What Nietzsche in fact performs is to reverse the false hierarchy exposed by the third error, such that humanity's most brutal instincts come to dominate, to the extent that all possible measures of restraint are rendered defunct. It is no coincidence that the superhuman is envisaged as a direct disciple of Dionysius: ethical values are obstacles to be surmounted and completely eliminated from one's path. There is actually no sense in which Nietzsche can be interpreted as an instigator of the proletarian revolution. That said, it is also true that Nietzsche advances views that are radically different from those attributed to him by right-wing thinkers, from Martin Heidegger to Julius Evola. Nietzsche's deconstruction of the subject sets the grounds for a twofold reconstruction, but the fact remains that his thoughts tended more towards the superhuman than the posthuman. Holding this against him, however, is hardly fair or reasonable, for he could not have foreseen what the twentieth century would make of superhumanism. Those great thinkers who sought to see in Nietzsche a positive version of the overman – Vattimo, but also Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari – were in fact engaging the posthuman in its embryonic form.

The posthuman is 'open' not only from an ontological point of view but also, and perhaps above all, because of the historical uncertainty concerning the future: think again, here, of Nietzsche's claim that "only something which has no history can be defined". The posthuman considers the animal not as an unrestrained form of will to power but, rather, as integral to its own being, through the relation between credit/debt. There is no such thing as 'pure humanity': species are simply an abstraction through which we strive to grasp the complexities of multiform species inhabiting the world. The third error thus has clear ecological implications: humans, in this view, are integrated into the natural world, which means that the current state and level of destruction of resources cannot be readily

²⁷ Cf. Leonardo Caffo, *La possibilità di cambiare: azioni umane e libertà morali* (Milan: Mimesis, 2012).

²⁸ Cf. Gianni Vattimo, *Il soggetto e la maschera. Nietzsche e il problema della liberazione* (Milan: Bompiani, 2003).

reprogrammed. In Nietzsche, these ideas are interpreted through political rather than moral categories: the space we inhabit is preserved by virtue of the fact that it *hosts us*. A posthuman perspective suggests the opposite, for nature is not an external entity. Hence the infinite dual perspectives originating in Nietzsche's work, including ecology (here intended in its broader philosophical meaning). The focus, however, is once more entirely on the body:

[...] body, body, body. Curious how, normally, when we are healthy, we scarcely realise that we have one, and take its functions for granted. Suffice it to fall ill, however, and the body becomes the centre of our attention; simply breathing, urinating, and having a bowel movement [*andare di corpo*, as they used to say in the olden days,] become the basic facts that determine joy or pain, causing relief or distress.²⁹

Think, here, of Nietzsche's deteriorating health. How do we separate all of this from his thought? How can we not understand that his obsession with the body comes from the sheer absence of positive feelings on the same? In the context of Nietzsche's thought, ecology constitutes a kind of medicine to the *n*th degree, namely the hope of being saved from the obsession with corporeality, finitude, death. But it is precisely through the deep consciousness of this condition that the elimination of all hierarchies can then be thought: through the ultimate realisation that with animals – and *as* animals – we share the finiteness of being, death, and dying. The idea of human beings positioned above all other natural entities comes crumbling down in the face of human defecation, trembling, and suffering. With the collapse of hierarchies, what is left is the bifurcation between the superhuman and the posthuman. The latter does not pursue eternity through hybridisation with technology – as is the case in transhumanism – but posits, rather, an acceptance of that sense of finality with no end. We have no actual purpose (this is the meaning of the death of God) but this does not mean that we should wander aimlessly with no 'after' in view. We are animals because there is no real sense in which we could otherwise be what we are, and therefore we are not superior to animals because we could not be superior to that which also makes us what we are. The posthuman is the realisation that the body is subject to mutations. There is no one model of what it should be or become. In the course of life, changes first manifest themselves imperceptibly. But then they become more noticeable, often rather harrowingly so. A disease or condition makes for a disharmonious relation to the human form, and marks the deterioration of one's strength. Old age empties human structure of its basic foundations, and growing up, in this sense, comes down to the progressive deformation of one's body and self. What else would humanism be doing, then, if not striving to overcome that sheer certainty of being little more than flesh in a state of constant decay? The posthuman does not give way to negative nihilism, of course; otherwise we would be right back where we started. What it does seek to do, rather, is to tend towards an understanding and awareness of our limitations, as well as a constant exercising of formal stability. In the logic of a strange archetype which is no longer defined by discrimination of any kind, the form invoked here is that of the animal as the ultimate repository of that certainty that human beings die simply because they are born.

5. False Values

The fourth error takes issue with the false values that are integrated into and thus determine the modalities of living as regulated by humanity itself. Norms, codes of conduct, dogma are, essentially, groundless falsities that generate ideologically constructed narratives. On his part, Nietzsche protests against the Church and positivism, against Jews and nation states. He calls for the dismantling of those values, in other words, that are imposed from above. And yet we know that the result, in Nietzsche, is the absence of values; a kind of transvaluation that is overpowered by the presence of the superhuman and thus leaves no space for morality. This is by far the most complex question posed by the four errors. Nietzsche destroys established values, calling for other values in their stead, but the fact remains that his values cannot really count as such. Beyond good and evil there is power – the will to power – and the scenarios it produces. Needless to say, the future of the posthuman seeks to be completely different to that of the superhuman, but this is where it becomes difficult to come to grips with Nietzsche's own limits. If all is convention, then why should we choose good over evil? We could appeal to nature and empathy, to the idea of conserving species, or to the future. Nietzsche, however, takes a different view of the matter. There is, nonetheless, a possible reading of Nietzschean philosophy that leads, once more, to alternative routes:

²⁹ The original can be found in Tiziano Terzani, *Un altro giro di giostra* (Milan: Longanesi, 2004), p. 34.

Whoever has overthrown an existing law of custom has hitherto always first been accounted a *bad man*: but when, as did happen, the law could not afterwards be reinstated and this fact was accepted, the predicate gradually changed; – history treats almost exclusively of these *bad men* who subsequently become *good men*!³⁰

What Nietzsche is suggesting, in his *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (1881), is that there is something philosophically and fundamentally absurd – and thus to be vigorously questioned and opposed – in the mode of thinking that attributes to the status quo the qualities of immutability and universality. That is where the state of things are seen as merely demanding adherence, with the only alternative being that of receiving accusations of evildoing. Change against all odds, conversely, is what characterises both the superhuman and the posthuman.

It is worth remembering that Nietzsche did not enjoy any level of fame, not even when he was still mentally sane. When not overtly rejected, his ideas would simply fall into oblivion. This is not a mere autobiographical detail or the ravings of a madman. There is definitely something to his firm belief that he was ahead of his time. And his extreme vision was, because of this, largely misunderstood. With his new transvaluation (a critique of all that which offered fixed beliefs) Nietzsche carves out a difficult space for himself. But how do we catch sight of the future, in his work and beyond, the time to come, and the detonation of the present? Nietzsche establishes different ways of thinking power, and looks for ways of bridging gaps: all of this unsettles the contemporary from within. The values to which the posthuman (re)turns are not external impositions or causes in search of effects. Nietzsche challenges the idea of life as a function of an afterlife or as an anchoring to science. And yet his idea of relying only on oneself is certainly not unproblematic. The posthuman, on its part, does not resolve the conflict between inside/outside by means of a new god but, rather, through a critique of the notion of looking 'only to oneself'. The self, for Nietzsche, does not exist: it is a plurality of concepts, forms of life, pasts, presents, and futures. The posthuman, then, is a form of being that takes multiple forms: the realisation that – paraphrasing Aristotle – being can be said in many ways. But no one way is superior to another. This is the most distinctive of posthuman values. Of course, it generates one ripple effect after another. Not least because our social ontologies are founded on diametrically opposed precepts. We are surrounded by mountains of human-made – indeed all too human – categories.

However much humanity discovers that it is defined by suffering, it is difficult, if not humanly impossible, to be in this world. What is left, in the absence of values? It is difficult to think, with Nietzsche, that there is truly nothing special and distinctive about human life:

If we speak of *humanity*, it is on the basic assumption that it should be that which *separates* man from nature and is his mark of distinction. But in reality there is no such separation: 'natural' characteristics and those called specifically 'human' have grown together inextricably. Man, at the finest height of his powers, is all nature and carries nature's uncanny dual character in himself.³¹

Nietzsche, then, does not use the word 'values' for those values that are of his own making. He implies, rather, that they are 'facts'. While he is indeed remembered as the philosopher of interpretations – "facts are just what there aren't, there are only interpretations"³² – there is the fact that his use of the naturalistic fallacy is extended and extensive precisely because it is in facts that he grounds his philosophy. Humanity is nature: this is the salient fact, by him repeated in all his works, and this is what he then builds his table of values on. As Hilary Putnam has shown through his reflections on the theme, facts and values are not as distant from one another as they may seem on initial examination.³³ Every choice made about facts traverses certain values, and vice versa. There is, nevertheless, an important sense in which Nietzsche proposes a return to facts – a sort of 'unamendability', if you like³⁴ – precisely by destroying values. This is very much in contradiction with the traditional perception of Nietzsche as an

³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* [1881], eds Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; repr. 2005), p. 18.

³¹ "Homer's Contest" [1872], in the Cambridge version of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, pp. 174–181 (p. 174).

³² Friedrich Nietzsche, "Notebook 7, end of 1886 – Spring 1887", in: *Writings from the Late Notebooks. 1885–1888*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; repr. 2006), p. 139.

³³ Cf. Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

³⁴ Cf. Maurizio Ferraris, "Inemendabilità, ontologia, realtà sociale", *Rivista di estetica* 19.1 (2002): 160–199.

unrestrained antirealist of sorts. Nietzsche's anchoring in facts does not facilitate the process of understanding his thought. But it is certainly the case that the posthuman also has a somewhat self-evident spiritual component. What is lost in the concept of the posthuman is the very possibility of separating the various sub-organisms, namely all that which makes up what we call nature, or universe, or, more to the point, reality. Posthuman values present continuities with some of the Eastern sensibilities that were keenly observed by Nietzsche and emerge in his concept of the eternal return. Values, one could argue, are those images through which we preserve the diversities of being. Nietzsche, surely enough, destroys good and evil for the strong and the weak, yet to what end?

The objective is, once more, both identical and opposite to that of the posthuman notion of corporeality. The conceptual definitions of strength and weakness originate in one's own body, and the same can be said for values: those principles that, in the posthuman, regulate human existence. But it is so in a specific sense, namely in the realisation that the very fact of having a body corresponds to an inviolable ontological quality. And if 'our' body does not exist – if it becomes a continued extension of other bodies – then a posthuman ethics become all the more evident. When Nietzsche thus pushes the limits and creates a kind of superhumanism, he goes beyond borders, states, regions, and all kinds of division. His, however, is ultimately an internally-oriented mode of reunification, whereas ours must look outwards. Here lies Nietzsche's most important error. The superhuman body devours alterity due to fear. The posthuman body, in turn, is devoured by alterity, because there is, in fact, only one body.

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