

The Future is Superhuman:
Nietzsche's Gift

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Evolution does not desire happiness; it wants evolution and nothing more. – Only if humanity had a universally recognized *goal* could one propound ‘such and such *should* be done’: for the time being, there is no such goal (Nietzsche, *Dawn* aphorism 108).

...if a goal for humanity is still lacking, is there still not lacking – humanity itself? (Nietzsche, ‘Of the Thousand and One Goals’, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)

1. Nietzsche conceived the *Übermensch* as a response to the crisis of European civilization, namely, the death of God and the arrival of nihilism. It is a notion that many of the most creative philosophers of the twentieth century took up and transformed under a Nietzschean inspiration. The question is what it is to mean to us today. There is a legacy here that needs working and thinking through. As the late French philosopher, Dominique Janicaud advised us, in confronting our fluid human complexity...

We must know how to establish...a paradoxical “economy” strategically combining a *cautious humanism*, warning against the inhuman or the subhuman, and an *opening up to possible* superhumans...that lie dormant in us. On the one hand, the *defence* of the human against the inhuman, on the other, the *illustration* of what surpasses the human in man.¹

2. In *Dawn* Nietzsche declares that “we are experiments” and the task is to want to be such (D 453). What is his meaning? In what sense *are* we experiments? And what is the experiment about? I believe it’s a modest proposal on Nietzsche’s part, in which he attacks the “bloodless fiction” and “abstraction” of *the* human being (D 105). It’s an argument in favour of human pluralization and working against the closure of the human being. As Nietzsche writes in a note of 1880:

My morality (*Moral*) would be to take the general character of man more and more away from him...to make to a degree non-understandable to others (and with it an object of experiences, of astonishment, of instruction for them)...Should not each individual (*Individuum*) be an attempt to achieve a *higher species than man* through its most individual things? (KSA 9, 6 [158]).

3. What does Nietzsche teach in *Zarathustra*? Not only does he express his desire for the superhuman or overhuman, but equally his love for humankind and to whom he wishes to bring a gift (Prologue 2). If the superhuman is to be the new *Sinn* of the earth, it is also the case that humanity itself is lacking. If God is dead then the superhuman or overhuman is the gift that can now be presented to humankind: *‘I teach you the Superhuman. The human is something that should be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?’* (ibid. 3) As Zarathustra notes, all creatures have created beyond themselves. The question facing the human being is whether it wishes to be “the ebb of this great tide” or return to the animals and not overcome itself. The human is to become for the superhuman what the ape is to the human, namely, a laughing stock or a painful embarrassment. Continuing with this quasi-evolutionary parable, Zarathustra says that if we have made our way from worm to man, there still remains much within us that is worm, and although we were once apes man is now more of an ape than any ape. The superhuman is to be our new hope, the lightning and madness that emerges out of the dark cloud of man and in which man can find his purification:

In truth, the human is a polluted river. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted river and not be defiled.

Behold, I teach you the superhuman: he is this sea, in him your great contempt can go under.

What is the greatest thing you can experience? It is the hour of the great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness grows loathsome to you, and your reason and your virtue also (ibid.).

4. In Nietzsche’s famous image the human is a rope fastened “over an abyss” and between animal and superhuman: “A dangerous going-across, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous

looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and staying-still” (ibid. 4). Furthermore, what is great in the human is that it is a bridge and not a goal: the human is the site of life’s self-overcoming. Instead of seeing in the human the fundamental lack of life or entirely senseless forces, Nietzsche posits the becoming of superabundant forces in which life is able to become an exploration and experimentation:

I love those who do not know how to live except their lives be a down-going, for they are those who are going across...

I love him who lives for knowledge and who wants knowledge that one day the superhuman may live. And thus he wills his own downfall...

I love him who throws golden words in advance of his deeds and always performs more than he promised: for he wills his own downfall...

I love him whose soul is overfull, so that he forgets himself and all things are in him: and thus all things become his downfall (ibid.).

5. The emphasis in the book, when Nietzsche presents the doctrine of the superhuman, is on the experimental character of our knowledge of the human and of the earth. In the discourse which closes Part One of *Zarathustra*, significantly entitled ‘Of the Gift-Giving Virtue’, bearing testimony to the spirit of generosity and excess Nietzsche is in search of, he writes:

The body purifies itself through knowledge; experimenting with knowledge it elevates itself: to the discerning human being all instincts are holy; the soul of the elevated human being grows joyful.

Physician, heal yourself: thus you will heal your patient too. Let his best healing-aid be to see with his own eyes him who makes himself well.

There are a thousand paths that have never yet been trodden, a thousand forms of health and hidden islands of life. The human and human earth are still unexhausted and undiscovered (‘Of the Bestowing Virtue’, 2).

6. The superhuman seems to be the universal goal Nietzsche thinks humanity is need of, as that which will give meaning to the earth in the wake of the death of God and the emergence of nihilism: “*All gods are dead: now we want the superhuman to live*” – let this be our last will one day at the great noontide!” (ibid. 3) However, it’s a universal of new *peoples*, affirming a genuine pluralism of values and modes of life: each people are to be an

experimenter. In the crucially important discourse entitled ‘Of Old and New Law-Tables’ Nietzsche argues that a new nobility is needed, one that will oppose all mob-rule and despotism, and he adds:

For many noblemen are needed, and noblemen of many kinds, *for nobility to exist!*
Or, as I once said in a parable: ‘Precisely this is godliness, that there are gods but no God!’ (‘Of Old and new Law-Tables’, 11)

Nietzsche’s great hope is that the human animal will cease being a piece of chance and a meaningless accident. The contrast made is with “the last human”, a human that has discovered an easy contentment (“happiness”) and then blinks. For Zarathustra this is the most contemptible human being, knowing little of love, creation, and longing.

7. Nietzsche has Zarathustra declare that the *Übermensch* is his paramount and sole concern, not man - and not the neighbour, not the poorest, not the most ailing, and neither the best (Z ‘Of the Higher Man,’ 3). In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche stresses that the *Übermensch* is a “very thoughtful word” (*ein sehr nachdenkliches Wort*). Most commentators in the Anglo-American reception see it as little more than a part of the misguided dreamy and utopian Nietzsche.² However, it is a notion that a number of post-Nietzschean thinkers have made use of and adapted to the concerns of their own philosophical programmes. Heidegger holds to different views of it at different times in the development of his own thinking. At one point it is judged to symbolise the consummate subjectivity of the reign of planetary technology and the supreme realisation of the modern “will to will”; at another time it is construed as the exact opposite, as “the shepherd of Being”.³ In key strands of post-war French thought the superhuman or overhuman assumes an emblematic role and stands as the key word for designating new modes thinking, feeling, and existing. We see this configuration at work in the writings of Deleuze, Foucault, and Derrida. In *Les Mots et les*

choses (1966), for example, Foucault argued that the overhuman signifies the point at which Nietzsche discovered the double death of God and man, to the extent that: “It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man’s disappearance”. For Foucault, this void does not mark a deficiency or constitute a lacuna that needs to be filled. Rather, “It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think”.⁴ For Derrida it becomes the deconstructive figure par excellence, the figure who does not mourn the loss of the question of Being but who dances playfully outside the house of Being.⁵

8. More recently, Gianni Vattimo has reclaimed Nietzsche’s metaphor for the purposes of discrediting the modern utopian notion of a tragic, heroic subjectivity, and it is this interpretation that I think captures well a key aspect of Nietzsche’s *post-metaphysical* move. For Vattimo, Nietzsche’s thought is not the pure symptom of crisis and decadence but offers a possible proposal for a breakthrough. The breakthrough is to a post-metaphysical human being conceived as a plural subject capable of living his/her interpretation of the world without needing to believe that it is “true” in the metaphysical sense of the word (grounded in a secure and steadfast foundation).⁶ The superhuman is a new non-dogmatic image of thought: a seduction, a temptation, an experiment, and a hope. Perhaps most importantly, then, the superhuman is a sign of a new modesty within humankind’s self-awareness and self-appreciation. This is an overlooked aspect of Nietzsche’s teaching that, I believe, Vattimo’s work especially helps to bring to light.

9. Notwithstanding the reputation he enjoys, Nietzsche is a thinker of modesty. He calls for a new style of philosophy, which he calls, historical philosophizing, and with it a new virtue, namely, that of modesty (HH 2). In addition, against the claims of morality Nietzsche says

that his task – the self-overcoming of morality – favours “more modest words” (D Preface). And in a note of 1884 he says that humankind is now entering a new phase in its existence, that of “the modesty of consciousness”, in which the “human” is to be overcome (WP 676). The experiment Nietzsche envisages, the experiment of the human future, is a modest one, even though this might strike many of us as incredulous. The portentous language of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* may conceal this important fact. For Vattimo we need to get beyond tragic and negative nihilism and see nihilism as an indicator of, in the West, our emancipation, namely, our emancipation from moral monism, dogmatism, and absolutism. As Nietzsche expresses it, “I have declared war on the anemic Christian ideal...not with the aim of destroying it but only of putting an end to its tyranny and clearing the way for new ideals...” (WP 361) For Vattimo nihilism, if we listen to its message carefully, denotes the “increasing awareness that we do all our thinking within the boundaries of that same culture [western culture], since the very idea of a universal truth and a transcultural humanism...has arisen precisely within this particular culture”.⁷

10. The attempt is often made, for good reasons, to save Nietzsche from the charge of being a nihilist. However, at the same time it is important not to lose sight of the pedagogic aspects of his treatment of the problem. As one commentator has noted, if the sickness and malaise of modern humans is a symptom of nihilism, it is nihilism that is also the cure.⁸ Indeed, in one sketch Nietzsche conceives nihilism as tremendous purifying movement in which nothing could be “more useful or more to be encouraged than a thoroughgoing *practical nihilism*” (WP 247). Nietzsche is not the only thinker in the latter part of the nineteenth century to be perturbed by growing pessimistic suspicion towards the human animal grounded in statements on the futility of human existence and reflecting a fundamental disaffection with this impossible animal.⁹ However, he is, I believe, the only philosopher to

welcome nihilism and actually embrace it. Nihilism is ambiguous since on the one hand it could be a sign of the increased power of the spirit but on the other hand it could equally be a sign of the decreased power of the spirit (WP 22). Nietzsche insists on this ambiguity in a number of notes from this period, for example: “Overall insight: the ambiguous character of our modern world – the very same symptoms could point to *decline* and to *strength*” (WP 110). Close beside the modern malaise there is an untested force and powerfulness of the spirit, so that the same reasons that produce the increasing smallness of man drive the stronger and rarer individuals up to greatness (WP 109). Indeed, Nietzsche wonders whether it’s not the case that every fruitful movement of humanity does not create at the same time a nihilistic movement: “It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth, of the transition to new conditions of existence...” (WP 112; see also 113A) In active nihilism spirit has grown so strong that previous goals, including convictions and articles of faith, have become incommensurate and the desire is to negate and to change one’s faith (one is no longer flourishing within the conditions of existence one finds oneself in). Or one may be experiencing a crisis of faith but one lacks the strength to posit a new goal. This experience reaches its “maximum of relative strength as a violent force of destruction”. The opposite is passive nihilism which denotes a weary nihilism that does not wish to attack anything. Here the spirit finds itself exhausted and the synthesis of values and goals dissolves; disintegration or mummification follows, in which whatever refreshes, heals, calms, and numbs emerges into the foreground in various guises (religious, aesthetic, moral, political, and so on) (WP 23). Nietzsche is insistent that nihilism must be faced since any attempt to escape it without revaluing our values so far will only produce the opposite and make the problem more acute (WP 30). In a note of 1886-7 Nietzsche writes:

The whole *idealism* of humanity...is on the point of tipping into *nihilism* – into the belief in absolute *valuelessness*, that is, *meaninglessness*...

The annihilation of ideals, the new wasteland, the new arts of enduring it, we *amphibians*. (KSA 12 7 [54]).

He insists that this process must be endured and persisted with; there can be no going back, no ardent rush forwards, and for the time being an attitude of parody in relation to all previous values is to be taken up and out of plenitude.

11. In the *Lenzerheide* notebook on European nihilism of June 1887 Nietzsche conceives of a crisis-point in which different forces will come together and collide, and in which there will be assigned “common tasks to people of opposing mentalities”, leading to the initiation of an order of rank among forces “from the point of view of health, and, he stresses, also at ‘one remove from all existing social orders’”. He asks who in this struggle will prove to be the strongest, and states that it is not a matter of numbers or of brute strength. The strongest will be the most moderate ones who do not need extreme articles of faith (dogmas). These spiritually mature human beings can concede a good deal of contingency and nonsense and even love this and they can think of the human being with a significant reduction in its value without becoming small and weak. These are the ones who are richest in health, equal to the misfortunes of life and therefore less afraid of them, and “*who are sure of their power.*” These confident human beings can be said to “represent with conscious pride the *achievement* of human strength.”¹⁰ Nietzsche is insistent, then, that humanity needs a new aim (WP 866) and this new aim will eventually conquer the pathological feeling of nihilism.

12. For Vattimo it is even possible to speak of a “destining” of the West on this issue, and this is the issue of secularization and its task:

The history of the dissolution of metaphysics, and in general of the reduction of the sacred to human dimensions, has its own logic, to which we belong and which supplies us, in the absence of eternal truths, with the only guide we gave for arguing

rationally and orienting ourselves in the matter of ethical choice. Our belonging to the history of the West as secularization is not something we can be convinced of by proofs...Let us call it a destiny – not in the sense of fate, but in the sense of the destination towards which are (already) headed by the very fact that we exist.¹¹

Vattimo writes, as is well-known, of a secular philosophy of weak thought and a “weakened universality”, by which I take him to mean that as humanity we are now united by a sense of our radical contingency. This is to speak of what he calls a postmodern pluralism in which all cultures, western and non-western, now participate. To be “mature” in this new pluralism is to make the transition from *veritas* to *caritas*:

In all fields, including science, truth itself is becoming an affair of consensus, listening, participation in a shared enterprise, rather than one-to-one correspondence with the pure hard objectivity of things...I would even say that this movement could be encapsulated by referring in Christian terms to a passage from *veritas* to *caritas*.¹²

13. Vattimo holds that to live with an affirmation of this postmodern Babel of cultures, irreducible to a common core, requires something of a superhuman effort, indeed, the very figure of the Nietzschean *Übermensch*:

If we do not want – as indeed we cannot, except at the risk of terrible wars of extinction – to give way to the temptation of resurgent fundamentalisms grounded in race, religion, or even the defence of individual national cultures against invasion by ‘foreigners’, we will have to imagine a humanity with at least some of the characteristics of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*.¹³

14. I have been claiming that Nietzsche’s fundamental problem is one of nihilism arising from what for him is the greatest recent event on earth, namely the death of God (GS 125). However, as Deleuze and Guattari point out in *What is Philosophy?*: “It is amazing that so many philosophers still take the death of God as tragic. Atheism is not a drama but the philosopher’s serenity and philosophy’s achievement”.¹⁴ In book five of *The Gay Science*

Nietzsche notes that, as a matter of integrity, unconditional and honest atheism is “a triumph achieved finally and with great difficulty by the European conscience”. It is “the most fateful act of two thousand years of discipline for truth that in the end forbids itself the *lie* in faith in God” (GS 357). But then, he quickly goes on to note something awkward or difficult:

As we thus reject the Christian interpretation and condemn its ‘meaning’ like counterfeit, *Schopenhauer’s* question immediately comes to us in a terrifying way: *Has existence any meaning at all?* It will require a few centuries before this question can be heard completely and in its full depth. What Schopenhauer himself said in answer to this question was – forgive me – hasty, youthful, only a compromise, a way of remaining – remaining stuck - in precisely those Christian-ascetic moral perspectives in which one had *renounced faith* along with the faith in God. But he *posed* the question – as a good European, as I have said, and *not* as a German (ibid.).

For me the *Übermensch* is the goal Nietzsche posits in the wake of the event of the death of God and in an effort to bestow upon the earth and human a new *Sinn*. I believe the emphasis is on human and social experimentation so as to produce plural “peoples”. A key question to consider, then, is precisely how we are to conceive of this commitment to experimentalism on Nietzsche’s part.

15. In the future, Nietzsche writes in *Dawn*, the inventive and fructifying person shall no longer be sacrificed and numerous novel experiments shall be made in *ways of life* and *modes of society*. When this takes place we will find that an enormous load of guilty conscience has been purged from the world. Humanity has suffered for too long from teachers of morality who wanted too much all at once and sought to lay down precepts for everyone (D 194). In the future, care will need to be given to the most personal questions and create time for them (D 196). Small individual questions and experiments are no longer to be viewed with contempt and impatience (D 547). In place of what he sees as the ruling ethic of sympathy, which he thinks can assume the form of a ‘tyrannical encroachment’, Nietzsche invites individuals to engage in self-fashioning, cultivating a self that others can look at with

pleasure. Unknown to ourselves we live within the effect of general opinions about “the human being”, which is a “bloodless abstraction” and “fiction” (D 105). Even the modern glorification of work and talk of its blessings can be interpreted as a fear of everything individual. The subjection to hard industriousness from early until late serves as “the best policeman” since it keeps everyone in bounds and hinders the development of reason, desire, and the craving for independence. It uses vast amounts of nervous energy which could be given over to reflection, brooding, dreaming, loving and hating and working through our experiences: “...a society in which there is continuous hard work will have more security: and security is currently worshipped as the supreme divinity” (D 173). Nietzsche’s commitment to experimentalism, it would seem, centres on a set of ethico-ontological concerns to do with human pluralization and combating attempts to place a “closure” on the human. As Spinoza asked: do we know what a body can do?

16. In contrast to these reflections, the transhumanist encounter with Nietzsche’s thought has a decidedly “out of this worldly” character about it, moving into the realms of futuristic speculation – and deception, according to Babette Babich. Stefan Sorgner, to whom Babich and Loeb are responding, has devoted considerable intellectual effort in recent years to appropriating Nietzsche for the transhumanist cause. In the electronic *Journal of Evolution and Technology* he has laid out in several essays what he sees as the “fundamental similarities between transhumanism and Nietzsche’s philosophy”, in particular the alleged rapport that exists between Nietzsche’s metaphor of the “overhuman” and the concept of the “posthuman”. According to Sorgner what is in common here is a shared commitment to a dynamic conception of nature and values in which human nature is taken to be a work in progress. As Sorgner writes in JET, “the species ‘human being’, like every species, is not eternally fixed and immutable” (20:1, March 2009, 31). However, the key question to pose is

whether Nietzsche's commitment to human and social experimentalism is of the same kind as the vision of transhumanists and their focus on *technological* intervention and enhancement (Nietzsche has little to say about technics in his oeuvre, with the exception of some interesting remarks on the machine in his middle period). Sorgner clearly holds that Nietzsche would favour the means of technology for bringing about the overhuman: although the emphasis in his work is on education and a new *paideia*, Sorgner argues that "the procedures of education and genetic enhancement are structurally analogous" (JET, 21: 2, October 2010, 5). Where Sorgner clearly departs from Nietzsche is on the question of "politics" and Nietzsche's attachment to class society. For Sorgner, it is the norm of negative freedom that merits our primary respect and that needs to inform our bioethical deliberations. In addition, Sorgner relies on a conception of "the next evolutionary step" when speaking of the transition to the overhuman – although he admits that both Nietzsche and transhumanists are vague on this issue – but it is far from clear that "evolution" is playing any role in this anthropocentric development. Sorgner's challenge, however, is to argue that the overhuman may be the "*ultimate foundation*" of Nietzsche's "worldview" (my emphasis).

17. In an inspired polemic Babette Babich - who is highly suspicious of the very language in which Sorgner writes about Nietzsche as a transhumanist *avant la lettre* - argues the transhumanist "ethos" is but one more expression of the ascetic ideal, expressing a hatred of the fragility and contingency of the human being and fantasising about perfection and immortality. This is deeply un-Nietzschean, as she demonstrates in such bracing terms. Did Nietzsche not herald the great affirmation as that of our *mortality*? (see D 72 & 501). Although transhumanists want and desire life, and as much "life" as possible, they do not want it, she notes, "with all its fuss and mess, with its banality and limitations but life as in a video-game or a movie..." Babich has a deeper worry over the potentially narcissistic

preoccupation with the transhuman: “What fascinates us here is pure promise, potential”, she writes, and then points out that although we can at present do none of the technological enhancements advocated by the transhumanists, we are “astonishingly preoccupied with the idea”, and to the extent that, “We do not worry about the destruction of wild-life all over the globe in our now long and ongoing holocaust of beings other than ourselves...” In short, for Babich our preoccupation with the transhuman and posthuman may be a little human, all too human, as well as ethically and politically pernicious. Her ultimate verdict seems to be that transhuman “is the latest word” for a “consumerist capitalist world-ethos”. However, in spite of the witty brilliance and erudition guiding her polemical critique of the transhumanist agenda, one is left wondering: what for her does the *Übermensch* speak of and who or what is Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*? It’s not for her, clearly, the human plus genetic enhancement, but what exactly is it and why did Nietzsche herald it?

18. In contrast to Babich, Paul Loeb expresses his sympathy with transhumanism – he sees Zarathustra as a figure of transition, virtually transhuman – and in his highly lucid contribution he seeks to show that transhumanists, who dream of a self-controlled and self-directed future, cannot afford to do without the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same simply because this requires the required power over time, including backwards-willing, that transhumanist thinking presupposes. For him this has been the great weakness to date of transhumanist thinking, namely, to neglect eternal recurrence and mistakenly see it as in conflict with the linear evolutionary progress indicated by the doctrine of the superhuman. For Loeb this is a well established paradigm in Nietzsche *Forschung* but a fundamentally mistaken one. As he points out, Nietzsche himself did not see his two fundamental doctrines as standing in contradiction with one another, and it’s possible to see the two as entirely compatible; it’s the great merit of Loeb’s work to show how this can be brought about. For

him a future new species will be “stronger, healthier, and more beautiful” once it has incorporated these two doctrines and learned how to practice power over time (transhumanist progress, he contends, actually *requires* eternal recurrence). Loeb lays down an essential challenge to the transhumanist movement when he claims that Nietzsche would have objected to any future movement inspired by his ideas that chose to ignore the doctrine of eternal recurrence. For Loeb there is no contradiction between the two doctrines and, as he points out, “if we do succeed in creating a stronger and healthier species, this is an achievement that we will be repeating...over and over for all eternity”. Moreover, it will be an achievement of health: “Zarathustra’s initial steps in creating a stronger and healthier species are only possible if his willing backwards in circular time allows him to shape the unchangeable past so that his creation is new and intentional”. In short, for Loeb we are unable to think the next so-called “evolutionary step” (to the transhuman) unless we fundamentally reconsider our relation to time. The vision and the riddle is one of “a stronger superhuman species whose new and higher capacities are a result of their complete control over time”. The problem with the transhumanist goal of seizing control of the human evolutionary destiny is that the plans for enhancement appear to be “inevitably determined and restricted by the chance-governed forces of natural selection” from which the species first emerged. For Loeb – and this is perhaps the most contentious aspect of his thinking on the issue – we have a “deep need” to gain some degree or measure of control over time: over its passing, over ageing, over entropy, and over death (in addition, Loeb writes of attaining “complete autonomy, self-affirmation, and self-knowledge”). But it’s a moot point whether this was, in fact, ever Nietzsche’s concern or ambition, especially given his Epicurean commitment to human mortality, which he never abandons (see, for example, D 78 and AC 58). Loeb seems to want of the human what one might call a cosmic exceptionalism, but I

see no basis or grounds for this in Nietzsche's philosophy (perhaps *Zarathustra* is an exceptional text in this regard).

19. In response to the inspiring essays of Babich and Loeb, Sorgner offers a contribution that aims to address the concerns of both authors and to further elaborate his deep-seated view that there is a genuine basis for a rapport between Nietzsche and the transhumanist movement. The issues his work has raised are vitally important ones and merit the attention of every serious reader of Nietzsche, not least because they invite us to reflect on Nietzsche's deepest concerns and the sense and significance of his most fundamental teachings.

¹ D. Janicaud, *On the Human Condition*, trans. Eileen Brennan (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 58.

² See, for example, Daniel W. Conway's thought-provoking essay, 'Overcoming the *Übermensch*: Nietzsche's Reevaluation of Values', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 20: 3, 1989, pp. 211-24.

³ See M. Heidegger, 'The Overman' in *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, trans. Joan Stambaugh et. al (San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 216-35; *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck & J. Glenn Gray (New York & San Francisco, Harper and Row 1968). See also *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1973).

⁴ M. Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 342.

⁵ See J. Derrida, 'The Ends of Man', in *Margins of Philosophy*.

⁶ G. Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 131.

⁷ G. Vattimo, *Nihilism and Emancipation*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. xxv.

⁸ John Marmysz, *Laughing at Nothing: Humor as a Response to Nihilism* (New York: SUNY Press, 2003), p. 32.

⁹ See, for example, Jean Marie Guyau's great text of 1887, which Nietzsche read, *The Non-Religion of the Future*: "If all is vanity, nothing, after all, is more vain than to be completely conscious that all is vanity", J. M. Guyau, *The Non-Religion of the Future* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 475.

¹⁰ This notebook has been deftly translated by Duncan Large in *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. Ansell Pearson and Large, (Oxford and Malden: Basil Blackwell 2006), pp. 385-90.

¹¹ Vattimo, *Nihilism and Emancipation*, pp. 32-3.

¹² Ibid., p. 35.

¹³ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁴ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Verso: 1994), p. 92.