

HERMENEUTICS



Dmitrii BELYAEV

Ph.D in Philosophy, Associate Professor of Philosophy. Lipetsk State Pedagogical University. Lenina str. 42, Lipetsk 398020, Russian Federation; e-mail: dm.a.belyaev@gmail.com

PHILOSOPHIC-POETIC EXPLICATION OF NIETZSCHE'S ÜBERMENSCH: APPROACHING THE PROBLEM OF COMPREHENSION RECONSTRUCTION

The idea of the overman becomes conceptually articulated only in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is him who creates the discourse of explicit speaking on the matter of the overman in the actual space of European culture, the discourse which initiated manifold receptions of formally “Nietzschean” overman and also had an impact on the general image of the overman established in the public consciousness in twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. However, trying to reconstruct and articulate Nietzsche’s take on the overman rationally and philosophically, we unavoidably face the problem of “semantic obscurity” of his works. It is caused by Nietzsche’s bent to the philosophic poetics embodied in his aphoristic, metaphoric intertextual word form, with which he aims to endow philosophy with a quality of permanently becoming creative thought, generated by each subject actively involved in it.

Nietzsche begins to speak of the overman explicitly only in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, where he introduces the special name “Übermensch” for the first time. Considering the genesis of Nietzsche’s philosophy, the stages of formation and forms of explication of the overman idea in it, there are some

general characteristics of the *Übermensch* to be distinguished which appear in the following key conceptual spheres of the whole continuum of Nietzsche's thought: *Dionysism*, *nihilism* and *will to power*. The former two had actually been articulated before the latter was conceptually defined. Each of them has a nomadic semantic and forms its own dimension attributing the *Übermensch*, and at the same time demonstrating his intertextual incorporation into Nietzsche's philosophic discourse.

Dionysism undergoes an anthropologically orientated transformation and deflects in the subjective personal dimension in the *Übermensch*. Accordingly, the *Übermensch*, a "Dionysian man" in Nietzsche's perspective, is endowed with "vitality", which actualizes some biological intentions and creates a space of one's "vital liberation". At the same time, Dionysism introduces creative energetics and a residual teleology of an aesthetic kind which transform into "anthropocultural fertility".

The "nihilism of strength" becomes for one an instrument to destroy the "old tables" – superficial values – and to clear space for reevaluation in the first place. It appears to be a way to objectify the intention of freedom, which is deeply characteristic of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

The concept of the "will to power" as the basis of the *Übermensch* brings together and deflects the Dionysian tendency and the "nihilism of strength" to some extent. The *Übermensch* actually explicates himself ontologically through the act of his powerful willing. Being in possession of *Macht*, a person is able to overstep the limits of Good and Evil as outward ethical absolutes and to create the world of values, thus being established in the rank of an overman, according to Nietzsche. Yet the conventional overman mode of being is aimed at permanently determining and reproducing the will to power. Everything that leads to its increase and amplification is good, while everything that brings to its decrease is evil. The will to power as a feature of the overman is in the first place an active postulation and explication of ego which allows the subject to affirm his/her self in its original authenticity.

As a result, we come to a conclusion that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is a human being of vital spirituality who has made a radical reevaluation of values, who has denied all the transcendental metaphysical foundations of life, all external absolutes-regulators, and who has become the lawmaker of new values owing to the permanent-dynamic becoming of the will to power. However, this definition determines only the general outline but does not reveal the actual substantial foundations of the *Übermensch*. This is due to the fact that definitiveness as a form of completeness eliminates the state of actual permanent becoming through the augmentation of the will to power immanent to the *Übermensch*, and thus the *Übermensch* is basically inexpressible in the modality of universal and complete anthropological models.

The main contribution Nietzsche made to define the overman is that he showed vividly and determinately that overman *is*, as a point of a should-be and necessary anthropologic evolution; however, Nietzsche does not give

any clear articulation of the subject-matter of *what* the overman is. He leaves the idea to be an open form-metaphor of the horizon of the superb human changeability.

Keywords: overman, Nietzsche, human being, Übermensch, dionysism, nihilism of strength, will to power, free minds, nomadic perspective on man, reevaluation of values

References

1. Aiken, D. "An Introduction to Zarathustra", *A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by C. Solomon. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972, pp. 30–114.
2. Bely, A. "Fridrikh Nitsšhe" [Friedrich Nietzsche], *Nitsšhe: pro et contra* [Nietzsche: pro et contra]. St.Petersburg, Russian Christian humanitarian Inst. Publ., 2001, pp. 878–903. (In Russian)
3. Belyaev, D. "Filosofskoe opredelenie sverkhcheloveka" [Philosophical Definition of a Superman], *Izvestiya Saratovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filosofiya. Psikhologiya. Pedagogika*, 2014, no 3, pp. 9–14. (In Russian)
4. Belyaev, D. "Nomadicheski-transgressivnaya interpretatsiya kontsepta «sverkhchelovek» v diskurse postmodernistskoi filosofii" [Nomadic-transgressive Interpretation of the Concept "Superman" in the Discourse of Postmodern Philosophy], *Istoricheskie, filosofskie, politicheskie i yuridicheskie nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedenie. Voprosy teorii i praktiki* [Historical, Philosophical, Political and Law Sciences, Culturology and Art Criticism. Theory and practice]. Tambov, Gramota Publ., 2013, no 11(37), vol. 2, pp. 30–32. (In Russian)
5. Berdyaev, N. "Nitsšhe i sovremennaya Rossiya" [Nietzsche and Contemporary Russia], *Birzhevye vedomosti*, no 14650, 04.02.1915, pp. 4. (In Russian)
6. Danto, A. *Nitsšhe kak filosof* [Nietzsche as a Philosopher]. Moscow, Ideya-Press Publ., Dom intellektual'noi knigi Publ., 2001. 280 pp. (In Russian)
7. Deleuze, G. *Logika smysla* [The Logic of Sense]. Moscow, Raritet Publ., Ekaterinburg, Delovaya kniga Publ., 1998. 480 pp. (In Russian)
8. Deleuze, G. *Nitsšhe* [Nietzsche]. St.Petersburg, AXIOMA Publ., 2001. 186 pp. (In Russian)
9. Garin, I. *Nitsšhe* [Nietzsche]. Moscow, TERRA Publ., 2000. 848 pp. (In Russian)
10. Jaspers, K. *Nitsšhe. Vvedenie v ponimanie ego filosofstvovaniya* [Nietzsche. An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophizing]. St.Petersburg, Vladimir Dal' Publ., 2004. 632 pp. (In Russian)
11. Jünger, F. G. *Nitsšhe* [Nietzsche]. Moscow, Praxis Publ., 2001. 256 pp. (In Russian)
12. Kaufmann, W. *Nietzsche – Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. New York: Vintage Books, 1968. 496 pp.
13. Lavrova, A. "Filosofiya F. Nitsšhe" [Philosophy of Nietzsche], *Filosofskie nauki*, 1997, no 1, pp. 38–51. (In Russian)
14. Markov, B. *Chelovek, gosudarstvo i Bog v filosofii Nitsšhe* [Man, State and God in the Philosophy of Nietzsche]. St.Petersburg, Vladimir Dal' Publ., 2005. 788 pp. (In Russian)

15. Nietzsche, F. *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collection of Works], vol. 1. Moscow, Mysl' Publ., 1990. 829 pp. (In Russian)
16. Nietzsche, F. *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collection of Works], vol. 13. Moscow, Kul'turnaya revolyutsiya Publ., 2005. 656 pp. (In Russian)
17. Nietzsche, F. *Sobranie sochinenii* [Collection of Works], vol. 2. Moscow, Mysl' Publ., 1990. 829 pp. (In Russian)
18. Nietzsche, F. *Volya k vlasti: opyt pereotsenki vseh tsennostei* [The Will to Power: Revaluation of All Values]. Moscow, RELF-book Publ., 1994. 352 pp. (In Russian)
19. Payne, D. *Translating Nietzsche's Übermensch*. Hamilton: McMaster University, 2004. 52 pp.
20. Pertsev, A. "Chto deistvitel'no govoril Nitsshe?" [What Really Nietzsche Said?], in: F. Nietzsche, *Utrennyaya zarya* [Morning Dawn]. Sverdlovsk, Volya Publ., 1991, pp. 291–304. (In Russian)
21. Radeev, A. "Iskusstvo tolkovaniya Nitsshe: istoriya odnogo kazusa" [The Art of Interpreting Nietzsche: the Story of a Mishap], *Al'manakh kafedry etiki i estetiki SPbGU*, no 1, ed. by A. Radeev. St.Petersburg, 2006, pp. 298–310. (In Russian)
22. Sineokaya, Ju. *Filosofiya Nitsshe i dukhovnyi opyt Rossii (konets XIX – nachalo XXI vekov): doktorskaya dissertatsiya* [Nietzsche's Philosophy and Russian Intellectual Experience (end of XIX – beginning of XXI centuries): Doctoral thesis]. Moscow, 2009. 426 pp. (In Russian)
23. Voigt, G. "Nietzsches Lehre vom Übermensch und die Gegenwart", *Geist der Zeit*, 1940, no 18, S. 602–607.
24. Wardell, L.O. *An Interpretation of Nietzsche's Übermensch*. Maynooth: National University of Ireland, 2007. 118 pp.
25. Yang, J. *A Philosophical Biography: Friedrich Nietzsche*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 656 pp.
26. Znamensky, S. "Sverkhchelovek' Nitshe" [Nietzsche's Superman], *Nitshe: pro et contra* [Nietzsche: pro et contra]. St.Petersburg, Russian Christian humanitarian Institute Publ., 2001, pp. 904–944. (In Russian)