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## NIETZSCHE'S ANTI-POSITIVIST THOUGHT IN HIS MIDDLE PERIOD

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I aim to call into question a long-established tradition within the Anglo-Saxon Nietzsche scholarship that regards Nietzsche's middle period as positivist. I assume an understanding of positivism as a worldview which considers science, particularly its explanation of phenomena in terms of causal determinism, the only source of knowledge and human potential. Generally speaking, while espousing such a conception of positivism, the Anglo-Saxon Nietzsche scholarship maintains that in *Daybreak* (1881) and especially in *Human, All Too Human* (1878) Nietzsche takes a positivist position, placing a high value on the natural sciences and totally rejecting metaphysics. This tradition mostly argues that in the *Gay Science* (1882) Nietzsche reverses this position, recognizing the limits of the natural sciences and rehabilitating art.

Arthur Danto [Danto 1965] and Walter Kaufmann [Kaufmann 1968] depicted Nietzsche's middle period as positivist. In their introduction to *Daybreak*, Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter take it for granted that *Human, All Too Human* is positivist: "*Daybreak* also post-dates a somewhat less-neglected prior volume, *Human, All Too Human* [...] the book often said to constitute the highwater mark of Nietzsche's 'positivist' phase (in which he accepted, somewhat uncritically, that science was the paradigm of all genuine knowledge)" ("Introduction: The Place of *Daybreak* in the Nietzschean corpus," in: Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, vii). They go on to say that in *Daybreak* Nietzsche espouses materialism as the only possible explanation of all phenomena on Earth, including our thinking and our moral judgements: "Like the Materialists, Nietzsche replaces 'moral' or 'religious' explanations for phenomena with *naturalistic* explanations, particularly explanations couched in physiological or quasi-physiological language" [Clark, Leiter 1997: xii].

Similarly, Jonathan Cohen [Cohen 1999] and Aaron Ridley [Ridley 2007] too hold a positivist view of Nietzsche's middle period.

Paul Franco argues that in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche "constructed his new ideal of the free spirit, a figure who, animated by reason and the scientific spirit, rejects

the comforting illusions of metaphysics, religion, and morality and lives ‘among men without praising, blaming, contending, gazing contentedly, as though at a spectacle, upon many things for which one formerly felt only fear’ (HH 34). Though in the books immediately following *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche modified his purely contemplative understanding of the free spirit—in *Daybreak* he spoke of the ‘passion for knowledge’ (D 429), and in *The Gay Science* he revealed that the so-called contemplative human being is actually the ‘poet who keeps creating this life’ and who continually fashions ‘something that had not been there before’ (GS 301)—he never abandoned his commitment to the ideal of a life devoted to the quest for knowledge and the ceaseless exploration of the ‘whole marvelous uncertainty and rich ambiguity of existence’ (GS 2). The free-spirit trilogy of the middle period thus discloses the appealing image of a rational Nietzsche.” [Franco 2011: 225]

According to Keith Ansell-Pearson,

“Nietzsche is clearly at his most positivistic in volume one of the text, *Human, All Too Human*. Here he favours a hard-nosed scientific practice that deflates the ideals, and the pretensions to truth and knowledge, of religion, of morality and of art. The text espouses, however, its own ideal of the free spirit, to be conceived as a spirit that hovers over human life without any real attachment, hovering over human customs, conventions and traditions, and that seeks to communicate the ‘joy’ it experiences from this supposed emancipation from the affects or emotions. It is a curiously passionless joy, one that divorces scientific practice and knowledge from the ends of eudaemonia or human flourishing. Indeed, Nietzsche sees the primary effects of genuine knowledge to be one of disappointment, even despair (see HAH 34 in particular). I seek to show that Nietzsche’s thinking on this set of issues undergoes a subtle but significant development with the subsequent texts that make up the project of the ‘human, all too human.’ My reading is, I believe, the first in the commentaries produced on the texts to identify this shift and take cognizance of it. Whereas in volume one of HAH Nietzsche negotiates the competing claims of the positivist goal of science and eudaemonistic philosophy by aligning himself with the former, in MOM and WS he seeks to marry the project of naturalistic demystification with a project of seeking ‘spiritual-physical health and maturity’ (MOM 184).” [Ansell-Pearson 2018: 12]

For Matthew Meyer, in *Human, All Too Human*

“Nietzsche argues that art is the product of an immature age that now needs to be subordinated to the rigors of the natural sciences (HH 222). In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche reverses his opinion, calling on us to become poets of our lives (GS 299) by subordinating scientific inquiry to the larger project of creating ourselves (GS 335).” [Meyer 2019: 36]

Unlike these scholars, I shall demonstrate that in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche does not take a positivist position which considers science the only source of knowledge and human potential, but rather recognizes the limits of science, looking at art as the genuine path to develop human potential. In particular, I will show that already in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche drafts the conception of the justification of life as an aesthetic phenomenon that he would fully develop later in the *Gay Science*. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that Nietzsche was coherent, taking an anti-positivist position in all three works of the middle period. Methodologically, I will not consider each text of the middle period per se. Rather, I will take them together, pointing out the fil rouge between them.

## 2. NIETZSCHE'S MIDDLE PERIOD

In the very first aphorism of *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche introduces a new kind of philosophy, historical philosophy:

“Almost all the problems of philosophy once again pose the same form of question as they did two thousand years ago: how can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality, the sentient in the dead, logic in unlogic, disinterested contemplation in covetous desire, living for others in egoism, truth in error? Metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the ‘thing in itself.’ Historical philosophy, on the other hand, which can no longer be separated from natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods, has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites, except in the customary exaggeration of popular or metaphysical interpretations, and that a mistake in reasoning lies at the bottom of this antithesis.” [Nietzsche 2005: 12]

Historical philosophy is the new type of philosophy pursued by the post-metaphysical philosopher, the free spirit. This philosophy, which Nietzsche famously calls “genealogy,” must borrow its method from the natural sciences, going in search of the origin of things. In doing so, historical philosophy makes a ground-breaking discovery: there are no opposites, contrary to what metaphysics wants us to believe, but everything originates in its opposite, rationality in irrationality, logic in unlogic and so on. The belief in opposites is the very foundation of metaphysics. The latter distinguishes between the world of everyday life, considered the world of appearance, of becoming, of evil, and the eternal world of God, regarded as the only true world. Historical philosophy has the great merit of showing that the metaphysical distinction between true and apparent world is fallacious. There is only one world, this world of everyday life, which is ruled by becoming.

“As soon as the origin of religion, art and morality is so described that it can be perfectly understood without the postulation of *metaphysical inference* at the commencement or in the course of their progress, the greater part of our interest in the purely theoretical problem of the ‘thing in itself’ and ‘appearance’ ceases to exist. For with religion, art and morality we do not touch upon the ‘nature of the world in itself’; we are in the realm of ideas, no “intuition” can take us any further. The question of how our conception of the world could differ so widely from the disclosed nature of the world will with perfect equanimity be relinquished to the physiology and history of the evolution of organisms and concepts.” [ibid.: 16]

The target of historical philosophy is not only metaphysics, but also art, religion, and morality. Nietzsche groups them together insofar as they all are based on the metaphysical distinction between true and apparent world. This distinction is supposed to be an eternal truth inspired by God. For centuries, it was taken for granted. Conversely, historical philosophy, getting to the root of this distinction, shows that it is a human, all too human idea.

For Nietzsche, it is “skepticism” the method of the natural sciences that historical philosophy employs to fight against metaphysics, religion, art and morality:

“From the ages in which men were accustomed to believe in possession of unqualified truth there has come a profound *displeasure* with all sceptical and

relativistic positions in regard to any question of knowledge whatever; one usually prefers to surrender unconditionally to a conviction harboured by people in authority (fathers, friends, teachers, princes) and feels a kind of pang of conscience if one fails to do so. This tendency is quite comprehensible, and its consequences give us no right to any violent reproaches against the way human reason has evolved. But gradually the scientific spirit in men has to bring to maturity that virtue of *cautious reserve*, that wise moderation which is more familiar in the domain of the practical life than in the domain of the theoretical life, and which, for example, Goethe has depicted in Antonio as an object of animosity for all Tassos, that is to say for unscientific and at the same time inactive natures.” [ibid.: 200]

Nietzsche contrasts the “man of conviction” with the man who pursues skepticism. The former believes in everything tradition passes on, taking for granted the alleged truths of authority (family, society, the government etc.). Instead, the man who pursues skepticism, namely the natural scientist and the free spirit, calls everything into question, looking for reasons to take a position or not, rather than merely relying on what authority says. Hence, skepticism is tantamount to calling everything into doubt, and to taking a stance based on one’s own judgement.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche again contrasts science with conviction:

“In science, convictions have no right to citizenship, as one says with good reason: only when they decide to step down to the modesty of a hypothesis, a tentative experimental standpoint, a regulative fiction, may they be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge – though always with the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust.” [Nietzsche 2008: 200]

Only by pursuing skepticism after the manner of the natural sciences we can free ourselves from the illusions originating from the metaphysical distinction between true and apparent world at the base of religion, art and morality. However, as we shall see, this does not mean that Nietzsche regards the results of the natural sciences as absolute truths. Rather, the belief in this kind of truths is exactly the target of the historical philosophy he embraces.

In my view, most scholars ignored Nietzsche’s conception of the very essence of the skeptical method and its consequences, which I aim to show in this paper. This essence will prove to be the causal explanation of phenomena. It is by means of this explanation given by the natural sciences that human beings liberated themselves from the fear of nature looming over them at the dawn of the civilization. In this respect, Nietzsche changes the traditional meaning of skepticism. While the Ancient Greek skeptics precisely rejected the causal explanation of phenomena in the name of skepticism, Nietzsche considers such an explanation the very essence of skepticism.

“If we transport ourselves back to the ages in which the religious life flourished most vigorously we discover a fundamental conviction which we no longer share and on account of which we see the door of the religious life once and for all closed to us: it concerns nature and our traffic with nature. In those ages one as yet knows nothing of natural laws; neither earth nor sky are constrained by any compulsion; a season, sunshine, rain can come or they can fail to come. Any conception of *natural* causality is altogether lacking. When one rows it is not the rowing which moves the ship: rowing is only a magical ceremony by means of which one compels a demon to move the ship. All illness, death itself is the result of magical influences.” [Nietzsche 2005: 63]

Early humans believed that natural phenomena were gods, and that, to avoid natural disasters, they had to sacrifice to the gods. Nature was perceived as the realm of magic, the only power that made things move. For example, they thought that the movement of a ship was not the consequence of rowing, but of the actions of a demon compelled through a kind of magical ceremony. At that time, life on Earth was very difficult as natural phenomena were unpredictable. Afterwards, with the development of the natural sciences, by substituting magic with causal explanation, human beings were able to reverse the situation. They could finally exert control over nature, predicting its behaviour. The natural sciences enabled them to gain practical advantages in everyday life, and to build always more sophisticated civilizations. Liberating humankind from the fear of nature, the natural sciences made life on Earth possible.

In *Daybreak*, focusing on the origin of custom, Nietzsche again contrasts the causal explanation of the natural sciences with magic:

“Whenever an evil chance event – a sudden storm or a crop failure or a plague – strikes a community, the suspicion is aroused that custom has been offended in some way or that new practices now have to be devised to propitiate a new demonic power and caprice. This species of suspicion and reflection is thus a direct avoidance of any investigation of the real natural causes of the phenomenon: it takes the demonic cause for granted. This is one spring of the perversity of the human intellect which we have inherited: and the other spring arises close beside it, in that the real natural *consequences* of an action are, equally on principle, accorded far less attention than the supernatural (the so-called punishments and mercies administered by the divinity). [...] It is a sad fact, but for the moment the man of science has to be suspicious of all higher feelings, so greatly are they nourished by delusion and nonsense.” [Nietzsche 1997: 24–25]

At the dawn of humankind, humans followed the prescriptions of the custom recommended by the gods. For example, they did not bath to get clean, but not to disappoint the gods. As a consequence, they failed to recognize the very reasons behind their behaviour. Over the course of time, this led humans to build their imaginary worldview based on the distinction between true and apparent world. Far from being the only one world, the supposed eternal realm of God is the consequence of the ignorance of causal explanation.

Hence, as Nietzsche suggests, we should “be grateful” to the natural sciences and causal explanation for having liberated us from magic: “The greatest accomplishment of past mankind is that we no longer have to live in continual fear of wild animals, of barbarians, of gods and of our own dreams.” [ibid.: 9]

At this stage, one may ask which kind of causal explanation Nietzsche has in mind, whether it is causal determinism or not. I am going to show that it is not causal determinism. I think this is evident from the following:

“The significance of language for the evolution of culture lies in this, that mankind set up in language a separate world beside the other world, a place it took to be so firmly set that, standing upon it, it could lift the rest of the world off its hinges and make itself master of it. To the extent that man has for long ages believed in the concepts and names of things as in *aeternae veritates* he has appropriated to himself that pride by which he raised himself above the animal: he really thought that in language he possessed knowledge of the world. The sculptor of language was not so modest as to believe that he was only giving things designations, he conceived rather that with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things; language is, in fact, the first stage of the

occupation with science. Here, too, it is the *belief that the truth has been found* out of which the mightiest sources of energy have flowed. A great deal later – only now – it dawns on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a tremendous error. Happily, it is too late for the evolution of reason, which depends on this belief, to be again put back. – *Logic* too depends on presuppositions with which nothing in the real world corresponds, for example on the presupposition that there are identical things, that the same thing is identical at different points of time: but this science came into existence through the opposite belief (that such conditions do obtain in the real world). It is the same with *mathematics*, which would certainly not have come into existence if one had known from the beginning that there was in nature no exactly straight line, no real circle, no absolute magnitude.” [Nietzsche 2005: 16]

In this aphorism, Nietzsche clearly says that language and logic do not express any eternal truths. Instead, they are based on invented concepts such as that of identity which do not correspond to anything real in the everyday life. In questioning logic, Nietzsche is questioning its main principles, including that of cause. The concept of cause as well as that of identity are not concepts whose truth is so evident to be taken for granted. Far from representing the true and eternal essence of reality, they are just the way humans understand the world. Hence, Nietzsche does not espouse causal determinism. From this aphorism it is clear that Nietzsche’s thought in *Human, All Too Human* cannot be considered positivist.

I cannot help but notice the strong similarities between this aphorism and the famous aphorism *The Origin of the Logical* from the *Gay Science*, which is as follows:

“What is the origin of logic in man’s head? Surely it arose out of the illogical, the realm of which must originally have been immense. [...] No living being would be preserved had not the opposite disposition – to affirm rather than suspend judgement, to err and make things up rather than wait, to agree rather than deny, to pass judgement rather than be just – been bred to become extraordinarily strong.” [Nietzsche 2008: 112]

As with *Human, All Too Human*, here Nietzsche affirms that logic is not based on concepts which have an eternal validity independent of our observation. Human beings made up concepts such as those of identity and cause because they were useful for life. For example, those humans who treated similar things as identical had more chances of survival compared to those who did not do so. Indeed, by means of the concept of identity, they could recognize food and hostile animals more quickly than those who did not possess this concept. Far from being the eternal truths inspired by God, the logical concepts of identity and cause were created by humans to make life on Earth possible. Especially the causal explanation was instrumental in liberating humankind from the fear of nature. The natural sciences had an important historical role but they are a human product after all, and thus convey no absolute truths.

Then, in the following aphorism, Nietzsche focuses on the notion of cause:

“It is enough to view science as an attempt to humanize things as faithfully as possible; we learn to describe ourselves more and more precisely as we describe things and their succession. Cause and effect: there is probably never such a duality; in truth a continuum faces us, from which we isolate a few pieces, just as we always perceive a movement only as isolated points, i.e. do not really see, but infer.” [ibid.: 113]

Nietzsche cannot be clearer. The natural sciences are a way of humanizing reality, of attributing to reality notions that only exist in the human mind. The concept of cause isolates

two things, the cause and the effect. However, in reality there is only a continuous flux. If there were another being on Earth which reasons differently from humans, this being would see the flux of the becoming that we are not able to see.

With regard to the above aphorism, Justin Remhof [Remhof 2015] argues that in the *Gay Science* Nietzsche holds a constructivist view of causality, considering causality a human interpretation, rather than a property inherent in reality. I agree with Remhof that in the *Gay Science* Nietzsche espouses a constructivist conception of causality. However, as I have shown previously, my point is that in the whole middle period of his philosophy Nietzsche adopts a constructivist conception of causality, affirming that the notion of cause is a human idea that was elaborated to preserve life.

I think that the continuity between *Human, All Too Human* and the *Gay Science* regards not only the constructivist conception of the notion of cause but also a positive view of art. Now I am going to call into question the long-established tradition that contrasts the alleged negative view of art expressed in *Human, All Too Human* with the positive one of the *Gay Science*. At first glance, it seems that tradition is right, undoubtedly there are many passages in *Human, All Too Human* in which Nietzsche harshly criticizes art. This is particularly the case with aphorism 153. Here Nietzsche affirms that art is so dangerous that it can even awaken the need of metaphysics in the free spirit:

“How strong the metaphysical need is, and how hard nature makes it to bid it a final farewell, can be seen from the fact that even when the free spirit has divested himself of everything metaphysical the highest effects of art can easily set the metaphysical strings, which have long been silent or indeed snapped apart, vibrating in sympathy; so it can happen, for example, that a passage in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony will make him feel he is hovering above the Earth in a dome of stars with the dream of immortality in his heart: all the stars seem to glitter around him and the earth seems to sink farther and farther away. – If he becomes aware of being in this condition he feels a profound stab in the heart and sighs for the man who will lead him back to his lost love, whether she be called religion or metaphysics. It is in such moments that his intellectual probity is put to the test.” [Nietzsche 2005: 82]

Metaphysics is the most fundamental human need we have. Hence, compared to the majority of people or “fettered spirits,” free spirits pursuing skepticism live in an unnatural condition. They sacrifice themselves, going against their very nature in order to carry out their skeptical inquiry. It is absolutely inhuman to isolate oneself from society, cutting off all relationships with other fellow humans and questioning all social values. This is the price free spirits pay for their quest for knowledge. However, even free spirits can fall prey to the metaphysical need. By raising the desire in immortality, art can tempt them to go back to metaphysics.

Then, in aphorism 108, Nietzsche rejects art, together with religion, metaphysics, and morality as narcotics:

“When we are assailed by an ill we can dispose of it either by getting rid of its cause or by changing the effect it produces on our sensibilities: that is to say by reinterpreting the ill into a good whose good effects will perhaps be perceptible only later. Religion and art (and metaphysical philosophy too) endeavour to bring about a change of sensibility, partly through changing our judgement as to the nature of our experiences (for example with the aid of the proposition: “whom God loveth he chastiseth”), partly through awakening the ability to take pleasure in pain, in emotion in general (from which the art of tragedy takes its starting-point).” [ibid.: 60]

Art, religion, metaphysics and morality are narcotics insofar as they worsen a ill from which we are suffering. They give the ill a more positive meaning, so as to temporarily alleviate it. However, in so doing, they prevent us from finding the cause of the ill and hence from uprooting it. The consequence is that our suffering increases, as the ill gets worse.

My point is that both aphorism 153 and aphorism 108, which are among the aphorisms that criticize art the most in *Human, All Too Human*, do not allow us to infer that in this work Nietzsche totally rejected art and the other products of metaphysical thought such as religion and morality. Starting from the previous aphorism on the narcotics, Nietzsche affirmed that metaphysical thought stops us from finding the causes of our ill. From the previous arguments, we know that the concept of cause is necessary to obtain knowledge of reality in order to preserve life. As a consequence, if we do not know the causes of our ill, we cannot eradicate it. In my view, this means that Nietzsche criticizes metaphysical thought precisely because it is not in the service of life. However, from this we cannot conclude that Nietzsche definitively discards metaphysical thought. Indeed, only from the point of view of the preservation of life metaphysical thought should be set apart. Beyond the preservation of life, humans have other needs. For example, they need to express their feelings, to build their character, to improve their self-awareness.

Metaphysical thought is instrumental in exactly meeting these needs. In this respect, Nietzsche positively depicts art and religion as “blossoms of the world”:

“These are, to be sure, a blossom of the world, but they are certainly not *closer to the roots of the world* than the stem is: they provide us with no better understanding of the nature of things at all although almost everyone believes they do.” [ibid.: 270]

On the one hand, art and religion do not help us to gain knowledge of the world, as they lack the method of the causal explanation by which the natural sciences unveil the alleged mysteries of nature. On the other hand, however, they are blossoms, thanks to them the human beings can fully express their feelings, give voice to their innermost human nature.

As humans, we both need to pursue skepticism and to meet our metaphysical need. Aphorism 251 reveals how this is possible:

“But if science provides us with less and less pleasure, and deprives us of more and more pleasure through casting suspicion on the consolations of metaphysics, religion and art, then that mightiest source of joy to which mankind owes almost all its humanity will become impoverished. For this reason a higher culture must give to man a double-brain, as it were two brain-ventricles, one for the perceptions of science, the other for those of non-science: lying beside one another, not confused together, separable, capable of being shut off; this is a demand of health.” [ibid.: 119]

We need two brain-ventricles, one to pursue skepticism and the other to meet our metaphysical need. In order to live, we need both knowledge and the illusion of knowledge. The causal explanation of the natural sciences is the precondition for our life on Earth. We cannot live in fear of natural phenomena all the time. On the other hand, we cannot live solely by skepticism. We need to fully express our humanity, and we do so only through the metaphysical products such as art and religion. Hence, it is clear that in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche can no longer be considered the advocate of the cold science fighting against the illusions of metaphysical thought. To put it another way, in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche is not positivist.



What is more, already in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche drafts the conception of the justification of life as an aesthetic phenomenon typical of *The Gay Science*, which has been mostly ignored by scholars. This is evident from the following:

“Among the things that can reduce a thinker to despair is the knowledge that the illogical is a necessity for mankind, and that much good proceeds from the illogical. It is implanted so firmly in the passions, in language, in art, in religion, and in general in everything that lends value to life, that one cannot pull it out of these fair things without mortally injuring them. Only very naive people are capable of believing that the nature of man could be transformed into a purely logical one; but if there should be degrees of approximation to this objective, what would not have to be lost if this course were taken! Even the most rational man from time to time needs to recover nature, that is to say his *original illogical relationship with all things*.” [ibid.: 28]

Metaphysical thought and especially art fulfil a task that the natural sciences are not able to fulfil: they help us to orient ourselves in the world by giving meanings to things. We know that metaphysics, art and religions are illusions, but we cannot do without them, otherwise our life on Earth would be unbearable. It is precisely by virtue of their illusions that they enrich our life. To thrive on Earth, we do not need the causal explanation of the natural sciences but illusions. Only through illusions can we become creators of our own self, reaching a higher level of self-awareness and developing our potential.

The awareness that, beyond skepticism, we still need to cultivate the illusions of art and metaphysics is another way to say that only as aesthetic phenomenon existence is justified. This is a conception that Nietzsche famously expresses in aphorism 107 from the *Gay Science*: “As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* to us, and art furnishes us with the eye and hand and above all the good conscience to be *able* to make such a phenomenon of ourselves.” [ibid.: 104].

The natural sciences give us a picture of the world fully explained, without secrets. However, we cannot live stopping our soul from depicting the world with the colours of its feelings. And we do so especially by means of art. Because of its metaphysical nature, we are aware that art is the realm of illusion. However, we need to consciously cultivate this illusion, otherwise life would be intolerable.

In light of the previous points, it is clear that the traditional view that contrasts the alleged positivism of *Human, All Too Human* with the passionate defence of art of the *Gay Science* is no longer tenable. In this respect, I agree with Ruth Abbey [Abbey 2022] who contends that we do not have to wait for the *Gay Science* to encounter Nietzsche's critique of the limits of science.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Throughout his middle period works, Nietzsche praises science for liberating humankind from the yoke of nature. Thanks to the scientific method, the causal explanation of reality which historical philosophy must borrow, humans were able to control and predict natural phenomena. Nevertheless, causal explanation of reality is not an objective truth independent of human perception. While such an explanation is useful for every day life, on the other hand it is a human, all too human concept born out of our self-preservation instinct.

The natural sciences were crucial to securing humanity's survival on Earth, however, they are not the only one source of life. There is a second source: art. Once humans have

solved their survival problems, they need to give meanings, values to the world, in order to orient themselves in it. It is art that enables us to create the illusions we need to live. Only by means of art can we develop our potential, becoming who we are. Ultimately, in acknowledging that science does not convey objective truths nor leads to the development of human potential alone, Nietzsche proves to be antipositivist in his middle period works.

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### Nietzsche's anti-positivist thought in his middle period

In this paper, I aim to call into question a long-established tradition within the Anglo-Saxon Nietzsche scholarship that regards Nietzsche's middle period as positivist. Unlike most scholars, I shall demonstrate that in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche does not take a positivist position, recognizing the limits of science with regard to knowledge of reality and its contributions toward unleashing human potential. Ultimately, I will show that Nietzsche was coherent, taking an anti-positivist position in all three works of the middle period.

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**Лаура Ланьйоне**

**Антипозитивістська думка Ніцше в середній період його творчості**

У цій статті я маю на меті поставити під сумнів давню традицію англосаксонської науки про Ніцше, яка розглядає середній період творчості Ніцше як позитивістський. На відміну від більшості вчених я покажу, що в «Людському, надто людському» Ніцше не займає позитивістську позицію, визнаючи обмеженість науки і щодо пізнання реальності, і щодо наукового внеску в розкриття людського потенціалу. Зрештою, я покажу, що Ніцше був послідовним у своїй антипозитивістській позиції в усіх трьох творах середнього періоду.

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