

# Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung

Begründet von

Mazzino Montinari · Wolfgang Müller-Lauter  
Heinz Wenzel

Herausgegeben von

Günter Abel (Berlin) · Werner Stegmaier (Greifswald)

Band 59

De Gruyter

# Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie

Hintergründe, Wirkungen und Aktualität

Herausgegeben von

Helmut Heit

Günter Abel

Marco Brusotti

De Gruyter

ISBN 978-3-11-025937-7  
e-ISBN 978-3-11-025938-4  
ISSN 1862-1260

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Nietzsches Wissenschaftsphilosophie : Hintergründe, Wirkungen und Aktualität / edited by Helmut Heit, Günter Abel, Marco Brusotti.

p. cm. – (Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung, ISSN 1862-1260)

German and English.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-11-025937-7 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1844–1900. 2. Philosophy. 3. Science – Philosophy. I. Heit, Helmut. II. Abel, Günter. III. Brusotti, Marco.

B3317.N499 2011

193–dc23

2011033588

*Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek*

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

© 2012 Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin/Boston

Druck: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

∞ Gedruckt auf säurefreiem Papier

Printed in Germany

[www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)

# Nietzsche as Phenomenalist?

Pietro Gori

In 1913 Hans Kleinpeter, an Austrian scholar mostly known for his popularisation of Ernst Mach's epistemology<sup>1</sup>, published a book titled *Der Phänomenalismus. Eine naturwissenschaftliche Weltauffassung*. In this text he described a new worldview grounded on the ideas of Mach, whose development started in the 19th century with the work of other authors who played a significant role in the history of the philosophy of science, such as Goethe, Avenarius, Clifford, Pearson, Stallo, – and Friedrich Nietzsche. The idea that Nietzsche could fall within this field of study was something quite new in the first years of the reception of his thought,<sup>2</sup> but despite its originality, the most important Nietzsche scholars neglected Kleinpeter's writings. My aim here is to analyze his primary claim about Nietzsche, i.e. the idea that "Mach und Nietzsche sind beide Phänomenalisten, beide haben die gleichen Prinzipien der Erkenntnislehre" (Kleinpeter 1913a, 143).

## 1. Kleinpeter's claim

Kleinpeter immediately realized that Nietzsche could be described as a "pure phenomenalist" when he first read a quotation from one of Nietzsche's writings.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it was the idea that it could be possible to compare Nietzsche's thoughts with Mach's epistemology that excited his interest in the

- 
- 1 Little biographical information is available on Kleinpeter, since his contribution to the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy has not been as important as that of Mach or Petzhold. In the *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon*, one only finds that he was born in Friedland (Bohemia) in 1869 and died in Linz-Niedernhart in 1916 (the same year as Mach), and that he was a high school teacher of Mathematics, Physics and Philosophy. One can find something more in the well known book that Lenin published in 1909 against the Empirio-criticism, where he writes that Kleinpeter was "an accredited disseminator of Machism: a pile of articles on Mach's views in philosophical journals, both in German and in English, translations of works recommended by Mach with introductions by Mach – in a word, the right hand of the 'teacher'" (Lenin 1947, 261).
  - 2 An exception could be Hans Vaihinger, who discusses Nietzsche in the last section of his book *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob* (published in 1911 but written more than thirty years earlier).
  - 3 So he wrote to Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche on 9.11.1912 (see Gori 2011). The four letters that Kleinpeter sent to Elisabeth are now at the Goethe-Schiller Archive (Weimar).

former's philosophy. Thus, in 1911 Kleinpeter started working on Nietzsche, and he did not forget to inform Mach about what he found, as can be seen in a letter that he sent to him at the end of that year.<sup>4</sup> Even though he wrote that it was "by chance" that he read Nietzsche for the first time, and that he found out for himself that what his contemporaries were writing about him was not entirely true, it is nonetheless very likely that someone told him about Nietzsche before this 'discovery'. Someone like Ferdinand Schiller, for instance, who was a great admirer of Nietzsche's philosophy (see Stack 1982) and who in 1911 met Kleinpeter at the International Congress of Philosophy held in Bologna.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the origin of his interest in Nietzsche, during that year Kleinpeter started working with his writings with the aim of showing that the first reception of his thought was incomplete, above all because no one was discussing Nietzsche's theory of knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1912 and 1913, Kleinpeter published several articles in which he presented the main claims that he later included in *Der Phänomenalismus*, and stressed the point that Nietzsche was not a philosopher in the 'old' meaning of this term, rather the forerunner of a new perspective of thought (the 'phenomenalistic' one) that at the present time is known as one of the first attempts to develop a *scientific philosophy*.<sup>7</sup> In his articles, Kleinpeter is plainly concerned with the correspondence between Nietzsche's philosophy and Mach's major claims, and presents for the first time the idea that they were both phenomenologists:

Nietzsche ist so gut Phänomenalist als Mach, und auch er bricht mit der unendlichen Gewohnheit aller Philosophen, etwas rein Begriffliches als real zu nehmen; Realitäten sind ihm nur die Empfindungen. (Kleinpeter 1912a, 7)

To properly understand on which grounds Kleinpeter builds his thesis, it is necessary to know what he is talking about when he says 'Phenomenalism'. Kleinpeter uses this word to define a new theory of knowledge, whose main outcome is the rejection of the mechanical worldview.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, this theory of

4 The letter has been written on 25.11.1911. See Heller (1964, 69) and Gori (2011).

5 Kleinpeter started corresponding with Schiller after their first meeting, and most probably the idea that one could find in Nietzsche's writings "eine Vorahnung der relativistischen Auffassung der Logik" has been suggested by the latter (Kleinpeter to Mach, 25.11.1911. See Gori 2011).

6 See Kleinpeter (1912a, 5). This is another topic that he stresses in the letter he sent to Elisabeth on 9.11.1912.

7 In his *Allgemeine Erkenntnislehre*, Moritz Schlick deals with this perspective, with some critical remarks on Mach's *phenomenism* and Kleinpeter's popularization of it. See Schlick (1918, 554).

8 See Kleinpeter (1913a, 5–6): "Mach war der erste, der erkannte, dass das damalige mechanistische Weltbild zu einer logischen Deduktion aller physikalischen Wahrheiten nicht ausreichend ist. Und da schlug er – inmitten einer Zeit, die gläubig zur

knowledge follows from an interpretation of the philosophy of Kant, with the aim of giving an answer to the question of the “thing in itself”. Very briefly, the basic ideas of the phenomenalist worldview are two:

- a) The sensations are the ground of our knowledge;
- b) The scientific concepts (but one can also say this of all concepts) are only labels and symbols and any ‘truth’ has only a relative meaning.

These ideas follow from the main statements presented by Mach and they can be understood only if one knows the proper definition of the concepts he uses. For example, what does he (and Kleinpeter) mean with “sensations”? Is it a purely empiricist concept? Or is it the sign of an idealistic worldview (as Lenin claims)? Many papers have been written on this topic, and still the distinction between sensations and elements that Mach presents in his *Analyse der Empfindungen* (1886) is not completely clear. Unfortunately, there is not space to address these questions here; thus, I will rather try to explain Kleinpeter’s view with just his words. With regard to the first point, in his book from 1913 he writes that the phenomenalist theory of knowledge is grounded on the certainty of immediate experiences (“unmittelbare Erfahrung”), and refers to one of Goethe’s statements that he found very close to both Mach and Nietzsche’s observations: “Die Sinne trügen nicht” (Kleinpeter 1913a, 68–69). Kleinpeter thus states that a phenomenalist thinks that any knowledge comes from our sensory experience and that one must consider its testimony as “true” and reject the value of any kind of logical concept.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the words we use are but labels and symbols created by our intellect to gather together many sensations and this – according to Mach’s principle of the economy of thought – makes possible the easier transmission of knowledge. In his book, Kleinpeter summarizes these ideas by claiming that “die Voraussetzung für die Entwicklung der phänomenalistischen Weltanschauung bildet die Erkenntnis von der Unmöglichkeit einer rein logischen Ableitung der Welt und ihrer Erscheinungen” (Kleinpeter 1913, 193). There is not enough space here to discuss whether Kleinpeter is upholding a pure empiricism or not; one can simply say that he rejects any logicism and thus tries to describe the creation of a new theory of truth that is not far from the perspective of Pragmatism. Kleinpeter knew this, and explicitly admitted this connection in an important passage that must be quoted:

Kant hatte zuerst alle menschliche Wissenschaft als Schöpfung der Verstandes bez. der Vernunft betrachten gelernt; ist aber dabei in den schweren Fehler verfallen, daß er die Resultate der Arbeit dieser Vermögen als unbedingt gültig angesehen hatte,

mechanischen Weltanschauung aufnahm – eine phänomenalistische Naturanschauungsweise vor, d.h. eine Beschränkung auf Beschreibung der reinen Erfahrung”.

9 This “truthfulness” can obviously be defined in simply a relative way.

während hierüber erst der folgenden Erfahrung das entscheidende Wort zukommt. Das hat dann mit aller Klarheit E. Mach in seinen naturwissenschaftlich-erkenntniskritischen Arbeiten dargelegt. Schlagen wir nun den Nachlaß Nietzsches auf, so finden wir in ihm denselben Gang der Erkenntnis skizziert. Der Kern dieser biologischen Erkenntnistheorie, die in naturwissenschaftlichen Kreisen, ferner in den philosophischen Gedankenrichtung des Pragmatismus bereits über zahlreiche Anhänger verfügt, liegt darin, daß die Wissenschaft nicht als eine Sammlung von Gesetzesparagrafen aufzufallen ist, [...] sondern daß das Wesen ihrer Begriffe darin besteht, den Menschen zur denkenden Tätigkeit anzuleiten. (Kleinpeter 1912b, 100)

In this excerpt, Kleinpeter summarizes the historical development of the new epistemology. Mach, Nietzsche and Pragmatism play the leading roles in this overcoming of Kantian philosophy and its idea that the concepts have an absolute value by taking on a biological theory of truth, i.e. the idea that our knowledge is but a tool to help human beings orientate themselves in the world.

The Phenomenalistic worldview thus follows from these two premises (which are, of course, strictly connected): if one admits that the sensations are the ground of our knowledge, then one must deny the value of any purely logical description of the world and consequently uphold a new notion of truth. To be a pure phenomenalist one must agree with those statements, and this is exactly what Kleinpeter thinks about Nietzsche. In the writings on which he concentrates (mostly in the *Nachlass*), Kleinpeter finds several statements concerning both the sensations and the relative value of the logical 'truth' and this is enough for him to assert that Nietzsche's thought was far from any 19th century metaphysical philosophy. But this idea doesn't exhaust Kleinpeter's reading of Nietzsche. As I have mentioned, his main aim was to show how important Mach's epistemology has been for the history of contemporary philosophy and he thus argued that most of the authors involved in the development of modern science shared his teacher's perspective. 'Phenomenalism' is but a name that Kleinpeter uses to define the worldview that arose from the 19th century scientific debate and stress its philosophical relevance (Kleinpeter 1913a, III). The reference to Nietzsche helps Kleinpeter demonstrate this last statement since he knows that Nietzsche was neither a scientist nor a thinker interested in pure theoretical investigations. Nietzsche was a philosopher – though of a new kind (Kleinpeter 1912a, 5) – and this for Kleinpeter meant that he was concerned with the relationship between human beings and the external world and was thus able to understand the practical implications of any new worldview. Nietzsche was interested in the outcomes of the new scientific investigations, and he agreed with many of them, but his thought cannot be reduced to these topics. Thus, he played a peculiar role in the history of Phenomenalism:

Mach, Stallo, Clifford, Kirchhoff, Pearson u. a. bemühten sich, eine metaphysikfreie Wissenschaft herzustellen. [...] Die Schwierigkeit, die hier liegt, und die Bedeutung derselben für die Philosophie hat vielleicht kein Denker so tief durchschaut als Nietzsche. Auf die Suche nach der Wahrheit zog er aus, und er war bekanntlich ein so grimmer Anhänger derselben, daß er gegen seine nächsten Gesinnungsgenossen mit groben Worten zu Felde zog (Kant, Schopenhauer, Darwin). Aber er fand die Wirklichkeit nicht, bzw. er fand, daß sie überhaupt nicht zu finden ist, daß die Welt der Logik eine Welt des Scheines ist. (Kleinpeter 1913a, 95)

## 2. Why is Nietzsche a Phenomenalist?

In a letter he sent to Mach on 22.12.1911, Kleinpeter sums up his ideas on Nietzsche:

[Nietzsche] spricht es zunächst als eine Vermutung aus, dass sich 'die' Materie auf Empfindung und alles auf Empfindung und Vorstellung müsse zurückführen lassen. Später werden die Ausdrücke entschiedener. Er bedauert den Tiefstand menschlicher Kultur, weil nur die Gebildetsten einsehen, dass es keine Sache gibt. [...]

Er tritt ganz unzweideutig für die Auffassung der Substanzbegriffe als Gedanken-symbole auf. Gegen eine "Welt an sich" hinter den Erscheinungen spricht er sich wiederholt aus. [...]

Er ist vielleicht der radikalste Vertreter des Relativismus in der Erkenntnistheorie. [...]

Der Pragmatismus ist schon ganz bei Nietzsche enthalten. Die Wahrheit der Kategorien der Logik erblickt er in ihrer Nützlichkeit zur Förderung unserer Einsicht und unseres Handels, in letzter Linie zur Förderung des Organismus. (See Gori 2011)

Kleinpeter tries to show to his friend and teacher that one can easily find in Nietzsche's writings many statements that are in compliance with his epistemology, and thus that Nietzsche is more noteworthy than he thinks. These observations clearly show that both Kleinpeter and Mach were not interested in Nietzsche before 1911, most probably because the reception of his works during those years was concerned with merely metaphysical and aesthetic questions.<sup>10</sup> For the first readers and admirers of Nietzsche, he was a philosopher of art and music, the author of the philosophical poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* and not much more. But a good understanding of his texts, even a brief reading of his notebooks reveal 'another' Nietzsche, a thinker whose philosophy was grounded on the most recent theoretical investigations. More precisely, he could be seen as the forerunner of a purely antimetaphysical worldview, whose main outcome was the rejection of the "old tables of truth".

10 This explains the critical remark one finds in the second edition of the *Analyse der Empfindungen* (Mach 1900 I, 12). See also Gori (2009a, XXXII-XXXIII).



Let's now see which proofs Kleinpeter offers to demonstrate his claims. First, one must consider whether one can find a kind of 'sensualism' in Nietzsche or not, to satisfy the first condition necessary to be a good phenomenalist. According to Kleinpeter, there is no problem in claiming this since there are several passages in which Nietzsche shows his belief in the value of sensations as the ground of our theoretical experience:

“Ich habe nichts als Empfindung und Vorstellung” urteilt Nietzsche im Jahre 1872.<sup>11</sup> Die Empfindung ist nicht Resultat der Zelle, sondern die Zelle ist Resultat der Empfindung, d.h. eine künstlerische Projection, ein Bild. Das Substantielle ist die Empfindung, das Scheinbare der Leib, die Materie.” [...] Hier haben wir also ganz klar den Machschen Ausgangspunkt von der Empfindung als Grundelement für uns. (Kleinpeter 1913b, 31)

Kleinpeter quotes other notes like these and compares them directly with Mach's statements on the same topic. In his opinion, these excerpts prove that Nietzsche was a sensualist à la Mach. However, such a claim is not so easy to make as Kleinpeter would have it. The interpretation of Nietzsche's statements on sensations is something on which scholars still do not agree, a problem not easily resolved.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, one must admit that Nietzsche's later claim that our “senses don't lie” (GD Vernunft 2, KSA 6, 75) sounds very similar to Goethe's statement and is in compliance with Mach's idea that our intellect falsifies the sensory data and creates a purely logical world. With regard to the note quoted by Kleinpeter, one must consider that it was written fifteen years before *Götzen-Dämmerung* and that it should be first compared with the main work of Afrikan Spir (see Schlechta/Anders 1962, 148). However, even though one cannot be certain in claiming that Nietzsche gave to the term sensation the same meaning as Mach (at least not in all his writings), it is nonetheless true that one finds in the former's notebooks many passages in which he refers to the senses as the starting point of our relationship with the external world and that during the last years of his thought he stated many times that our knowledge was but the interpretation our brain makes of the sensory data – i.e. a falsification of their testimony (see Gori 2009b, 126 ff.). Thus, one cannot completely disagree with Kleinpeter on the first point.

As regards the second condition, the relative value of any 'truth', Kleinpeter thinks that this follows from the first one, since the idea that our knowledge is grounded on our sensations is the opposite of saying that the logical concepts are absolutely true. As Mach writes, the notions we use in science are mere symbols, labels useful for sharing our knowledge. In Nietzsche one can find many statements like this, from the observations written in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn* on the metaphorical value of our 'truths', to the

11 We now know that this note is from 1973. See NL 1973 26[11], KSA 7, 574.

12 One can find an account of this question in Small (1999) and Riccardi (2011).

ideas published in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* or in his 1880s notebooks. The rejection of logicism is one of the topics Kleinpeter stresses most in his book from 1913:

Nietzsche sagt, daß die Logik die Wirklichkeit fälscht, daß wir durch unsere Art der Auffassung die Wirklichkeit 'logisieren'. Die Begriffe, die wir uns ersinnen, existieren nicht in der Wirklichkeit, und es entspricht ihnen auch kein Ding, sondern sie sind nur Mittel, um unsere Erlebnisse angenähert reproduzieren zu können. (Kleinpeter 1913a, 83–84)

This is of the greatest importance for Kleinpeter, since an antimetaphysical worldview can be grounded only on the idea that there is nothing that has an absolute value (concepts, things, etc.). Thus, if one finds in Nietzsche the idea that the words we use are but symbols to simplify the reality, and that they are 'true' as far as they are 'useful', this makes him a good phenomenalist. Furthermore, as mentioned, Kleinpeter not only finds a correspondence between Nietzsche's arguing against the truthfulness of the logical notions and Mach's statements on the economy of thought; he also goes on to claim that they both presented a peculiar theory of knowledge which was grounded on a biological perspective. That is to say that both Mach and Nietzsche thought that the development of human intellect has been useful for the preservation of the species and that the way we think (i. e. the way our brains process the sensory data) helps human beings to win the struggle for life (see Mach 1923, 245–265; FW 110 f., KSA 4, 469–472; Čapek 1968; Gori 2009a, 64 ff.). Thus, one must not only compare Nietzsche with Pragmatism, but also with Goethe and Darwin:

Wie für Goethe und Darwin ist für Nietzsche der Mensch ein tätiges und kämpfendes Wesen, die Erkenntnisse sind ihm Urteile und die Urteile Mittel im Lebenskampf. [...] Damit kommt Nietzsche auf die biologische Grundlegung der Erkenntnislehre, auf den Wahrheitsbegriff des Pragmatismus. Darin liegt die Bedeutung der neuen instrumentalen Theorie der Wissenschaft. (Kleinpeter 1913a, 209)

This is something quite new in the history of Nietzsche reception. Scholars began dealing with his theory of truth only after many years; during the first period of reception one can hardly find someone who looked at it as a significant feature of his thought. Moreover, the relationship between Nietzsche's ideas on knowledge and the theory of evolution has been established during the last decades, but at the beginning of the 20th century it would not have been easily accepted. Kleinpeter knew that he was presenting an unknown image of Nietzsche, and repeated it throughout his writings, with the express aim of showing the members of "the circle of the official philosophy" that until that day no one had really understood the deepest meaning of his thought (Kleinpeter 1912a, 5). According to him, the philosophy one finds in

Nietzsche's writings is in compliance with the conclusions of modern epistemology, and one can even define it as a good overcoming of Kant's philosophy. Thus, Nietzsche didn't just foreshadow phenomenalism, rather he was one of the main exponents of this worldview:

'Jedes Wort ist eine Metapher', 'alle Erkenntnis ein Gleichnis'. Der Schein wird eine Notwendigkeit; das ergibt sich aus der Natur des Erkenntnisvorganges. In diesem Sinne ist daher alle Erkenntnis relativ; eine absolute, unbedingte Wahrheit ist nicht nur unerreichbar, sondern auch undenkbar, logisch unmöglich. Nietzsche zerstört Kant a priori und verwandelt seine Lehre in einen Relativismus. Nietzsches Verdienst um die Erkenntnistheorie beschränkt sich nicht auf diese Umdeutung der Kantischen Lehre; er wurde auch der Schöpfer einer neuen positiven auf der Biologie basierten Erkenntnistheorie. [...] Nietzsche ist kein Vorläufer des Phänomenalismus mehr, er ist selbst schon einer seiner bedeutendsten Vertreter. (Kleinpeter 1913a, 27)

### 3. Conclusion

What is new in Kleinpeter's reading of Nietzsche is the perspective from which he looked at him. Kleinpeter was not a scholar interested in the 'classic' history of philosophy; his fields of study were rather physics and mathematics, and he tried to show how deeply the outcomes of modern epistemology could affect the cultural plane. Thus, when he read Nietzsche his background was completely different from that of Windelband or Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (the two scholars that he criticizes in Kleinpeter 1912a). According to Kleinpeter, Nietzsche is closer to Albert Lange than to Schopenhauer: in his notebooks one finds many observations that can be seen as a development of the philosophy of Locke, Berkeley and Hume rather than the expression of a metaphysical perspective, and for that reason he can be compared with the forerunners of the newly born scientific philosophy (i.e. Ernst Mach and the pragmatists). This side of Nietzsche's thought is something that at the beginning of the 20th century was not well known, and – according to Kleinpeter – the reason is that no one read his *Nachlass*. In Nietzsche's notebooks, Kleinpeter finds 'another' philosopher, maybe the 'real' Nietzsche, and thus claims that one must deeply study these texts to provide a good interpretation of his thought. One of the problems with Nietzsche is that he wrote his books in a metaphorical language which can hardly be understood (Kleinpeter 1912a, 6) and one can therefore find the real content of his thought only by looking under the surface of the words. This cannot be done without referring to the notes that Nietzsche wrote throughout his life, which are clearer than the aphorisms of his main works and much more understandable than the poetic lines of his *Zarathustra*. Thus, Kleinpeter is the forerunner of a new way of reading Nietzsche, a way characterized by a greater attention to the *Nachlass*, now seen as the necessary starting point for a study aimed at both giving meaning to the most obscure

passages of the published text and understanding the deepest content of his philosophy.

Nun ist es trotzdem möglich, den tieferen Sinn [von Nietzsches] Gedankenarbeit zu erfassen. Das kommt daher, weil von einer ganz anderen Seite her dieselbe Reformation des philosophischen Gedankens in Angriff genommen und im Zusammenhang mit klaren wissenschaftlichen Betrachtungen durchgeführt wurde, nämlich von E. Mach und einigen andern Naturforschern und Mathematikern, die aus dem Wesen der positiven Wissenschaft heraus die Notwendigkeit einer völligen Umkrempelung der bisher geläufigsten philosophischen Grundanschauungen erkannten. (Kleinpeter 1912a, 6)

By claiming that Nietzsche was a good phenomenalist, Kleinpeter shows his being 'untimely', i.e. the fact that he foreshadowed the development of contemporary philosophy. A philosophy that is starting from pure theoretical assumptions could lead us to a new relationship with the outer world and therefore to a renewal of our way of both arguing and acting. In fact, Kleinpeter describes the phenomenalist worldview as a wide perspective involving both the theoretical and the practical plane, and Nietzsche is a good example for him to show how deeply science and philosophy can be related. This is the most interesting point of his investigation, the main contribution to the history of the reception of Nietzsche in the early 20th century. Of course, one can discuss whether Kleinpeter's observations on Nietzsche's sensualism are right or not, or say that he's not been as great interpreter of his thought as Löwith, Jaspers or Heidegger, but from his marginal point of view Kleinpeter foreran some outcomes of the most recent studies on Nietzsche. During the last few decades, scholars involved in the research on the sources of Nietzsche's thought have shown that he was interested in the natural sciences and that some of his most important philosophical ideas were grounded on what he read in scientific journals (see Mittasch 1950 and Mittasch 1952; Babich/Cohen 1999; Small 2001). They also (but only in the most recent years) dealt with his relationship to Mach and confirmed some of Kleinpeter's claims, e.g. the fact that both Nietzsche and Mach presented a biological theory of truth and rejected the metaphysical side of modern science (see Hussain 2004; Gori 2009a and Gori 2009b). Of course, Nietzsche's interest in the scientific debate and his (direct or indirect) relationship with some of the main scientists of his time do not mean that his thought can be reduced to a mere interpretation of scientific research, nor that his aim was to uphold a scientific worldview (i.e. that he was a pure phenomenalist), but one must admit that it all played a significant role in the development of his philosophy. Moreover, one must say that the contextualization of Nietzsche in the late 19th century philosophical debate is of the greatest importance to understand his thought since those decades were a very rich period with regard to cultural life in which science played a fundamental role. Thus, even though he was an original thinker, many of the ideas that Nietzsche

shares with the scholars that Kleinpeter indicates as the forerunners of the phenomenalistic worldview were most probably “in the air”<sup>13</sup>, and it is very likely that he simply read them in a book or journal and assimilated them into his own philosophy.

Kleinpeter wrote all of this between 1912 and 1913, many years before the first scholars involved in a both historical and philological investigation of Nietzsche’s thought. One can disagree with him in claiming that Nietzsche was a phenomenalist in the strict sense, but there is no doubt in stating that he joined the debate of his era and that his philosophy was grounded on some of the main questions of the 20th century debate:

Wir haben im Pragmatismus wie in der Erkenntnislehre Machs wahrhaft neue Erkenntnisse vor uns, die einem gefunden Boden entwachsen sind und die bestimmt erscheinen, die herkömmlichen Anschauungen der historischen Philosophenschulen von Grund aus umzustürzen. Die Geschichte dieses Ringens wird die Geschichte der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts sein. (Kleinpeter 1912c, 407)

Kleinpeter looked at both Pragmatism and the philosophy of Ernst Mach as the reference points for the development of contemporary philosophy, and if one thinks about what happened after his death one can say that he was not completely wrong (just consider that the Vienna Circle – a turning point in the history of thought – rose from the Association Ernst Mach). On the other hand, one knows that the philosophy of the last century is grounded on many more perspectives than these, so Nietzsche’s thought had many sources. Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s being in compliance with the epistemological conclusions of several important scholars of the late 19th century is one of the elements that allow us to argue (with Kleinpeter) that he took part in the renewal of the Western worldview.

### Literatur

- Babich, Babette/Robert Cohen (eds.) (1999): *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science. Nietzsche and the Sciences II*. Dordrecht, London, Boston (Kluwer).
- Čapek, Milič (1968): “Ernst Mach’s Biological Theory of Knowledge”. In: *Synthese*. Vol. 18(2), pp. 171–191.
- Gori, Pietro (2009a): *Il meccanicismo metafisico. Scienza, filosofia e storia in Nietzsche e Mach*. Bologna (Il Mulino).
- Gori, Pietro (2009b): “The Usefulness of Substances. Knowledge, Science and Metaphysics in Nietzsche and Mach”. In: *Nietzsche-Studien*. Vol. 38, pp. 111–155.
- Gori, Pietro (2011): “Drei Briefe von Hans Kleinpeter an Mach über Nietzsche”. In: *Nietzsche-Studien*. Vol. 40, pp. 290–298.

13 In the *Preface* to the first edition of his *Mechanics*, Mach writes that some of the ideas presented in that book have been discussed by other scholars such as Richard Avenarius (Mach 1883).

- Heller, Karl Daniel (1964): *Ernst Mach: Wegbereiter der modernen Physik*. Wien, New York (Springer Verlag).
- Hussain, Nadeem (2004): "Reading Nietzsche through Ernst Mach". In: Thomas Brobjer/Gregory Moore (eds.): *Nietzsche and Science*. Aldershot (Ashgate), pp. 111–129.
- Kleinpeter, Hans (1912a): "Die Erkenntnislehre Friedrich Nietzsches". In: *Wissenschaftliche Rundschau* 3/1912, pp. 5–9.
- Kleinpeter, Hans (1912b): "Nietzsche als Schulreformer". In: *Blätter für deutsche Erziehung* 14/1912, pp. 99–101.
- Kleinpeter, Hans (1912c): "Der Pragmatismus im Lichte der Machschen Erkenntnislehre". In: *Wissenschaftliche Rundschau* 20/1912, pp. 405–407.
- Kleinpeter, Hans (1913a): *Der Phänomenalismus, eine naturwissenschaftliche Weltauffassung*. Leipzig (Barth).
- Kleinpeter, Hans (1913b): "Ernst Mach und Friedrich Nietzsche". In: *Neue Freie Presse* 17423, pp. 31–32.
- Lenin, Vladimir (1947): *Materialism and Empirio-criticism; Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy* (transl. by A. Fineberg). Moscow (Foreign Languages Publishing House).
- Mach, Ernst (1883): *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung historisch-kritisch dargestellt*. Leipzig (Brockhaus).
- Mach, Ernst (1900): *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen*. 2nd edition. Leipzig (Barth).
- Mach, Ernst (1923): *Populär-wissenschaftliche Vorlesungen*. 5th edition. Leipzig (Barth).
- Mittasch, Alwin (1950): *Friedrich Nietzsche Naturbeflissenheit*. Heidelberg (Springer).
- Mittasch, Alwin (1952): *Friedrich Nietzsche als Naturphilosoph*. Stuttgart (Kröner).
- Riccardi, Mattia (2011): "Nietzsche's Sensualism". In: *European Journal of Philosophy*, forthcoming.
- Schlechta, Karl & Anni Anders (1962): *Friedrich Nietzsche. Von den verborgenen Anfängen seines Philosophierens*. Stuttgart, Bad Cannstadt (Fromann).
- Schlick, Moritz (1918): "Allgemeine Erkenntnislehre". In: Friedrich Stadler/Hans Jürgen Wendel (eds.): *Moritz Schlick Gesamtausgabe*. Wien, New York (Springer).
- Small, Robin (1999): "We Sensualists". In: Babette Babich/Robert Cohen (eds.): *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science. Nietzsche and the Sciences II*. Dodrecht, London, Boston (Kluwer).
- Small, Robin (2001): *Nietzsche in Context*. Aldershot (Ashgate).
- Stack, George (1982): "Nietzsche's Influence on Pragmatic Humanism". In: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 20/4, pp. 369–406.
- Vaihinger, Hans (1919): *Die Philosophie des Als-ob*. Berlin (Reuther).