Anthropocentrism and the Long-Term: Nietzsche as an Environmental Thinker

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Anthropocentrism and the Long-Term: Nietzsche as an Environmental Thinker

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ABSTRACT

Nietzsche has been advanced as an authoritative support for nearly every political aim since his death in 1900. Recent work has focused on his potential to contribute to environmental ethics. I defend the view that Nietzsche can contribute to both environmental ethics and aesthetics, and moreover, that his philosophy cannot be fully understood without the conceptual resources of environmental philosophy. Nietzsche’s critique of morality and positive ethical views cannot be understood independent of conceptual distinctions of anthropocentrism and topics such as future generations and biocentric discussions of axiology. Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature emerges from his rejection of both metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism and he advances a long-term ethical outlook for the future of humanity as a species understood as integrated within his overall conception and evaluation of nature.
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Chapter 1: An Environmental Nietzsche?¹

“One should conserve evil just as one conserves the woods. It is true that the earth became warmer through the thinning and clear cutting of the woods -- --“

-- (translated by Adrian Del Caro, and a special thanks to him for pointing out this fragment from the Nachlass) KSA 10. [5]38 --

I. Introduction

Philosophical analysis of the relation of Nietzsche to environmental philosophy began in earnest in 1991 with the publication of Max Hallman’s article “Nietzsche’s Environmental Ethics.” In this article Hallman attempted to challenge Martin Heidegger’s infamous interpretation of Nietzsche concerning what Nietzsche thought about the environment. This essay called for interpretative work that would exonerate Nietzsche from the Heideggerian

¹ Please note the following abbreviations for Nietzsche’s principal published works, and those explicitly intended by Nietzsche for publication, presented here in chronological order.

BT= The Birth of Tragedy
UM= Untimely Meditations
HAH= Human, All Too Human (including the first part of volume two “Assorted Opinions and Maxims”)
WS= The Wanderer and His Shadow (the distinctive second part of volume two of HAH)
D= Daybreak, Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality
GS= The Gay Science
TSZ= Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None
BGE= Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future
GM= On the Genealogy of Morality
TI= Twilight of the Idols
AC= The Antichrist
EH= Ecce Homo
charge that Nietzsche endorses or implies a position that might promote the human species’ technological mastery of the Earth. Hallman did not offer a completely convincing picture of Nietzsche but he did get something right that still informs the reception of Nietzsche. The pervasiveness of the Heideggerian interpretation of Nietzsche misled Nietzsche scholars concerning Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature and his critique of anthropocentrism, and so has perhaps fenced off a fruitful source of substantive reflection for environmental philosophers. In what follows I argue that this line of interpretation warrants serious attention by both Nietzsche scholars and environmental philosophers. Nietzsche qualifies as an environmental thinker even if he philosophized before the explosion of knowledge in earth science concerning the crises future living creatures now face because of the human species’ industrial revolution and he develops a philosophy of nature that merits analysis and consideration.

First, I give a brief chronological survey of the existing literature on this issue. Next, I examine each of the major contributions individually in more detail. Finally, I note the significant questions that the literature raises and outline my interpretative answers to these questions in chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

II. The Debate on Nietzsche's Environmental Thought

First, what makes a philosopher an environmental thinker? In the broadest sense, within contemporary philosophy, the philosopher must make a substantive contribution to the content or
understanding of either environmental ethics or environmental aesthetics. The following definitions offer adequately precise meanings of these disciplines:

**Environmental Ethics:** the attempt to expand moral thinking and action in two directions: beyond the human species and into the distant future.$^2$

(Some positions in ethics only imply concern for the “near-term,” i.e. the present generation or subsequent generations extending roughly about the length of a human lifetime. Other positions extend consideration beyond merely the next few generations. These positions concern the distant future, and so constitute “long-term” positions.$^3$)

**Environmental Aesthetics:** the study of the aesthetic appreciation of the natural world as well as human-constructed environments, and the aesthetic experiences of everyday life.$^4$

The literature primarily focuses on what contribution Nietzsche does or does not make to environmental ethics, as does my account. Nonetheless, I conclude at the end of the dissertation that Nietzsche can make contributions to both disciplines.

A thumbnail sketch of the chronological development of this literature follows below. I then organize the respective positions roughly by the extent to which their defenders argue that Nietzsche either evinces acceptance of an anthropomorphized conception of reality attended by an anthropocentric theory of values compatible with environmental degradation, or inversely, that Nietzsche actually criticizes anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism and legislates a deep

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$^2$ Nolt (2015), 251
$^3$ Nolt (2015), 254
$^4$ I give this as a composite definition based on the most recent publications giving an overview of the field as found both in the multi-authored volume *Environmental Aesthetics: Crossing Divides and Breaking Ground* (2014) and “Environmental Aesthetics” from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 
concern for the values in the world beyond the human species. Next, I critically evaluate their arguments in detail.

Nearly every scholar so far who has written on the relationship of Nietzsche to environmental philosophy addresses to what extent Nietzsche either exemplifies or commits to either anthropocentrism or non-anthropocentrism, i.e. manifestations of human-centeredness or manifestations to the contrary. Unfortunately, none of this literature adequately distinguishes the manifold range of meanings involved in this dichotomy. In ethics, in particular, an environmental philosopher must distinguish between the presence or absence of human-centeredness both as regards to conceptions of value and who or what counts as a part of a moral reference group, i.e. who or what receives moral consideration. When all juxtaposed together, the definitions of these positions follow as such.

**Axiological Anthropocentrism:** the idea that things have value only for humans and insofar as humans grant them value.\(^5\)

**Axiological Non-Anthropocentrism:** the idea that things can have value for (i.e., can be good or bad for) some non-humans.\(^6\)

**Ethical Anthropocentrism:** the idea that only humans are morally considerable (whereas various versions of ethical non-anthropocentrism extend moral considerability beyond the human species in varying degrees and extent).\(^7\)

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\(^5\) Nolt (2015), 248
\(^6\) Nolt (2015), 248
\(^7\) Nolt (2015), 251
Furthermore, philosophical conceptions of reality or even epistemic properties can manifest human-centeredness. Usage of the following terms, then, denote these tendencies when evaluating metaphysical and epistemic positions, respectively.

**Metaphysical Anthropocentrism:** a view of reality that sees human beings as the center or as the ultimate repository of meaning in the cosmos, or thinks that “a world” properly only exists for humans given their unique mode of cognition.

**Epistemological Anthropocentrism:** the view that only humans (and perhaps gods conceived anthropomorphically) can know (or register features of reality evaluated by other epistemic notions such as reliability or justification) or that even if nonhuman species can be said to have knowledge (or other epistemic properties), human knowledge is accorded a privileged epistemic status over and above perceptions and cognitions of the world by non-human species.\(^8\)

I also advance the following novel distinction concerning anthropomorphism, an error that Heidegger attributes to Nietzsche despite the fact that Nietzsche himself warned against this type of error. Note their meanings as used in this account.

**Metaphorical Anthropomorphism:** the tendency to attribute human thoughts, feelings, and capacities to non-human beings.\(^9\)

**Conceptual Anthropomorphism:** the tendency to attribute human concepts, or mental structures and constructs, to non-human natural phenomena.

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\(^{8}\) (modified) Hallman, 116

\(^{9}\) (modified) Nolt (2015), 247
Martin Heidegger, more than any other philosopher of the 20th century, influenced the reception of Nietzsche, at least in Europe. No other thinker wrote so much on Nietzsche while also developing independent philosophical views on quite such a scale as Heidegger. During the sequence of his watermark lectures of the 1930’s and 40’s Heidegger, specifically in the lecture course “European Nihilism,” portrayed Nietzsche as the culmination of the anthropomorphic metaphysics of the Western tradition and an apologist for the human species’ technological mastery of the planet. Heidegger, then, set the tone for the discussion of Nietzsche’s view on the environment by taking the most extreme counter position in the ensuing debate, i.e. Nietzsche affirms both an anthropomorphic conception of reality--- Heidegger’s language strongly suggests that he has conceptual anthropomorphism in mind--- and axiological anthropocentrism, though he does not specify this attribution with precisely this term. Heidegger’s claims regarding Nietzsche’s relationship to the environment went unchallenged until Max Hallman’s article in 1991 “Nietzsche’s Environmental Ethics.”

Hallman, nearly inverting Heidegger’s position, defended the view that Nietzsche is a deep ecologist. The Scandinavian naturalist Arne Naess coined this term to refer to a global movement that for many involved the endorsement of “biocentric egalitarianism”, i.e. the view that all living beings have an equal right to live and flourish. For Naess himself, in his more specific version of “deep ecology” that he called “Ecosophy T,” this involves a profound identification of oneself with the rest of the living world, what he calls “Self-realization” and a firm commitment to biocentric egalitarianism. All usages of this term, “deep ecology,” in what follows, then, will refer to Naess’ philosophical position regarding one’s relationship to the natural world. “Deep ecology”, then, as used in this study, constitutes an ethical position, not a scientific study.
**Deep Ecology**: the philosophical position of Arne Naess, consisting primarily of the endorsement of biocentric egalitarianism and the identification of one’s ego with the rest of the living world.\(^\text{10}\)

However, scholars of environmental science do recognize that the science of ecology, distinguished from “deep ecology,” still stands at the center of the development of environmental science, which of course, though a scientific study, may imply a host of ethical and policy considerations. Environmental science scholars define “ecology” as follows.

**Ecology**: the study of the interrelationships among organisms and between organisms, and between them and all aspects, living and non-living, of their environment.\(^\text{11}\)

The object of this discipline, an “ecosystem,” can be conceived on several different models. The definition of an “ecosystem” and these respective models follow here.

**Ecosystem**: an assemblage of organisms of different species living in some degree of interdependence in the same habitat, together with nonliving components of that habitat.\(^\text{12}\)

**Community Model**: the idea that the organization of an ecosystem is in many ways analogous to that of a community.\(^\text{13}\)

**Organismic Model**: the idea that the organization of an ecosystem is in many ways analogous to that of an organism.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{10}\) Nolt (2015), 164  
\(^{11}\) *Environmental Sciences*, 27-8  
\(^{12}\) Nolt (2015), 250  
\(^{13}\) Nolt (2015), 249  
\(^{14}\) Nolt (2015), 256
Thermodynamic Model: the representation of an ecosystem as a complex of material and energy flows.\textsuperscript{15}

Hallman’s interpretation caught the eye of Ralph Acampora and in 1994, in his article “Using and Abusing Nietzsche for Environmental Ethics,” he criticized Hallman for basing his defense of Nietzsche on isolated fragments. Acampora viewed Nietzsche as an aristocratic individualist and elitist rather than a deep ecologist committed to biocentric egalitarianism.

Martin Drenthen, in his 1999 article “The Paradox of Environmental Ethics: Nietzsche’s View of Nature and the Wild,” criticized Hallman on different grounds. Drenthen charged Hallman with ignoring the radical perspectivity characterizing the notion of der Wille zur Macht, an important component of Hallman’s interpretation regarding the ecological aspects of Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature. Though agreeing with Acampora’s hermeneutic criticisms against Hallman, Drenthen also criticized Acampora, too, claiming that Acampora artificially divides the constructive and deconstructive aspects of Nietzsche’s thought. Drenthen, like Acampora, disavowed that Nietzsche makes any substantive contribution to environmental ethics, but argued that Nietzsche can elucidate the divide between traditional environmental ethics in the “analytic” tradition and the concerns of post-modern environmental philosophers from the “continental” tradition. Drenthen emphasizes Nietzsche’s moral skepticism and its implications on the impasse across the Atlantic between these two very different approaches to the environment.

In 2004, Adrian Del Caro published a definitive and essential study of Nietzsche’s relation to the environment, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth*, an examination of the

\textsuperscript{15} Nolt (2015), 259
meaning and philosophical import of Nietzsche’s rhetoric concerning the earth, animals, and particularly his reevaluation of the quotidian over and above the concerns of metaphysics. This monograph surveyed all of the existing literature relevant to the debate and clearly establishes that the question of this debate is an indispensable component of Nietzsche studies.

In 1999, Graham Parkes argued in “Staying Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche as an Ecological Thinker,” published in the multi-authored volume *Nietzsche’s Futures*, that Nietzsche belongs among a minority tradition in the history of Western thought that opposes viewing the natural world as merely created for the benefit of human beings and as “unreal by comparison with an intelligible realm of unchanging ideas.” This essay did not engage the already published work by the authors mentioned above but did anticipate many of his arguments further developed in his article “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy: A Trans-European Perspective” published in 2005. In this article Parkes explicitly and exclusively addresses the work of Hallman, Acampora, and Drenthen published in *Environmental Ethics*. Parkes’s position completely inverts Heidegger’s interpretation and he even argues that Nietzsche moves past biocentrism, i.e. Nietzsche holds that the inorganic bears perspectives of value, too (yes, rocks)! Parkes also explores the deep parallels between Nietzsche and Eastern strands of thought such as Zen Buddhism and Daoism.

In 2008, Michael Zimmerman, in “Nietzsche and Ecology: A Critical Inquiry”, published in the multi-authored volume *Reading Nietzsche at the Margins*, brought the debate nearly back full circle and defended the plausibility of the Heideggerian reading of Nietzsche. He nearly endorses Heidegger’s position fully, but certainly represents a view that swings back in the

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16 Parkes (1998), 167
direction of challenging whether or not Nietzsche can offer anything meaningful to contemporary environmental philosophy.

In 2015, David E. Storey published a monograph specifically on the environmental reception of Heidegger’s thought, particularly as it involves his reception of Nietzsche. Storey not only criticizes most attempts to mobilize Heidegger for environmental ethics, but also criticizes his interpretation of Nietzsche. Most attempts to enlist Heidegger for the environment focus on his later philosophy, but Storey sees more potential in the earlier thought of Heidegger, which evinces a strong tendency towards a nonreductive naturalism, i.e. a view that does not attempt to reduce life to a subset of physics and so recognizes its inherent value as concomitant with its distinctive ontological status. Storey further argues that Heidegger misconstrues Nietzsche as an anthropocentrist. Instead of developing Nietzsche’s attempt to “anchor value in life”, Heidegger’s infamous “turn” to took a turn for the worse into a vacuous and unhelpful position of merely “letting things be.” Storey then devotes a chapter to exploring the ways in which environmental thought can develop Nietzsche’s work in the direction of nonreductive naturalism.

Two camps then have clearly formed on the question of the relationship between Nietzsche and environmental philosophy, with Drenthen’s position occupying the unoccupied zone between them. On the one extreme sits Heidegger. Zimmerman and Acampora hold similar though less extreme positions, respectively. This camp views Nietzsche as ultimately and merely concerned with human elites, who may use nature and other human beings for their own purposes with little to no regard for the interests and values of these lesser beings. On the other extreme sits Parkes. Hallman, Storey, and Del Caro hold similar though less extreme positions.\footnote{Storey, 8; 138-140}
positions, respectively. This camp views Nietzsche as ultimately concerned with the whole of nature, or life itself, and whose elitism is more akin to a perfectionism in which the recognition of the values of “lesser” beings plays an integral role in Nietzsche’s ethics. Furthermore, they make much of the fact that Nietzsche challenges the evolutionary superiority of the human species. Delineated out from Heidegger’s extreme characterization of Nietzsche as an apologist for environmental degradation on the behalf of elites to the extreme characterization of Nietzsche as akin to the Eastern sage affirming even the values of the mountain and the stream next to that of the pond lily the positions proceed as follows: Heidegger, Zimmerman, Acampora, Drenthen, Del Caro, Storey, Hallman, and Parkes. I examine their arguments in that order. I firmly reject the positions of Heidegger through Zimmerman, and give my qualified endorsements and assessments regarding the merits and problems with the remaining positions.

A. Heidegger: Nietzsche as an Apologist for the Technological Mastery of the Earth

Heidegger succinctly sketched his interpretation on these issues in the sections “Nietzsche’s ‘Moral Interpretation of Metaphysics’” and “Metaphysics and

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18 Technically, specifically on the issue of anthropocentrism, Acampora and Del Caro could switch places. Acampora does concede that Nietzsche criticizes anthropocentrism (though he views Nietzsche as “descriptively” anthropocentric) along with Del Caro, and even suggests that environmentalists could construe Nietzsche as an eco-natural holist. Del Caro, on the other hand, despite recognizing the criticisms that Nietzsche advances against anthropocentrism tends to, in his monograph *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric of Earth*, attributes to Nietzsche the view that human beings cannot escape their anthropocentric perspectives. However, Acampora gives such a strident polemical critique against any standard usage of Nietzsche for environmental ethics whereas Del Caro develops the positive environmental ethical aspects in Nietzsche’s value theory that I found it suitable to place Acampora closer to Zimmerman and Heidegger, and Del Caro with Hallman and Parkes, respectively. Additionally, Acampora, like Zimmerman and Heidegger, raises worries about the compatibility of Nietzsche’s thought with environmental degradation through modern humanity’s technological domination of the planet, whereas Del Caro rightly distances Nietzsche’s thought from this charge. Neither, unfortunately, distinguish between axiological and ethical anthropocentrism. See their respective sections below for a critical review of their work.
Anthropomorphism” in his lecture “European Nihilism.”

Here Heidegger makes two central claims concerning the relation of Nietzsche’s philosophy to the environment.

1. Nietzsche’s doctrine, der Wille zur Macht, completes the project of metaphysics-as-anthropomorphism by consciously acknowledging and affirming that humans project their own human meanings onto the rest of the world.

2. Nietzsche’s doctrine, der Übermensch, advocates an anthropocentric exemplification of power for the sake of power through the instrumentalization of other human beings and non-human life forms. (For Heidegger, this ultimately culminates in the technological mastery of the planet.)

In support for his claims Heidegger relies heavily and primarily on Nietzsche’s Nachlass, seemingly at the expense of his published writings. Del Caro, the most effective critic of Heidegger regarding these claims, rightly points out this fundamentally mistaken approach to interpreting Nietzsche. By placing emphasis on a limited selection of fragments, and ignoring the published writings, Heidegger delivers an arbitrary interpretation. Heidegger argues that Nietzsche views all moralities as metaphysical interpretations of the world that reflect the conditions of a certain type of life, i.e. conditions of a certain manifestation of der Wille zur Macht. These moral-metaphysical interpretations set up a transcendent world over and above the experienced sensible world. In this process, human beings impose meanings and values onto the world but naively unconscious of this process. Since human beings slavishly submit themselves

19 Heidegger (Krell) Volume IV, pgs. 76-90
20 Del Caro, 144
to these interpretations they exemplify a distinctive human impotence. For Heidegger, Nietzsche critically calls attention to this willed impotence and advocates for the conscious future realization of the unconscious processes of both positing values and imposing them onto the rest of the world, i.e. an acceptance of his teaching of *der Wille zur Macht*. In fact, Heidegger claims, this insight into the origin of values leads Nietzsche to posit power itself as the criterion of value. *Der Übermensch*, then, an exemplar of power, overcomes the moral past of humanity by getting over the need for “ideals and idealizations ‘above’ himself.”

This new type of being “wills man himself, and not just in some particular aspect, but as the master of absolute administration of power with the fully developed power resources of the earth.” Heidegger, then returns to his account of Nietzsche’s metaphysics. He contends that Nietzsche thinks every interpretation of the world posits values and so shapes and forms the world according to a human image. Heidegger points to *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche develops an interpretation of the “so-called mechanistic (or ‘material’) world” as the most basic manifestation of *der Wille zur Macht*. Heidegger notes that Nietzsche here extends usage of the notion of *der Wille zur Macht* as an explanatory principle of human drives and affects to a cosmological principle. Heidegger views this as methodologically similar to Descartes’s arguments for his metaphysical foundations “grounded on the self-certainty of the human subject”

21 Heidegger, 82
22 Heidegger, 82
23 Heidegger, 86
Protagoras. Heidegger emphasizes the prevalence and priority given to human subjectivity and the resultant metaphysical content answering the question of what beings are in each of these three teachings. Heidegger, though not stating this explicitly, implies that this anthropomorphic point of departure fosters an axiological anthropocentric outlook on the world, which he commends Nietzsche for honestly affirming, and so completing the history of Western metaphysics. Heidegger views Nietzsche as completing the Western project of metaphysics because he thinks that Nietzsche consciously affirms its inherent anthropomorphic tendency to project a human meaning laden with subjective valuation onto the world, which, for Heidegger, obscures a natural disclosure of the beings themselves. For Heidegger, then, Nietzsche embraces this inescapable condition of positing a human meaning onto the world which reflects the conditions of human power, and the resolute acknowledgement and affirmation of this power in the figure of der Übermensch.

Heidegger utilizes Will to Power 1224, a note that Nietzsche entitles “Decline of Cosmological Values” to develop the initial components of his account regarding Nietzsche’s supposed conscious embrace of “humanizing” the world. Here Nietzsche argues that the traditional concepts of “aim,” “unity,” and “being” falsely projected “some value into the world.”25 Anticipating the modern trajectory in which “we pull out again” these false ascriptions to the world, he claims “the world looks valueless.” Since, Nietzsche claims, these notions ground all the values only pursued so far in the history of the species, the skepticism concerning the applicability of such notions to the world results in the consequent sense of

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24 The text in question does not represent passages that Nietzsche explicitly chose to publish or arrange in this way. The interpreter of Nietzsche must juxtapose these passages along every other Nachlass passage, or give special contextual explanations for assigning a particular passage especial weight. For the rest of this work, I abbreviate this particular collection of fragments as follows: WP.
25 WP: 12
valuelessness. At the end of the note Nietzsche finds in this projection “the hyperbolic naiveté of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things.” Heidegger claims that the reader should proceed cautiously here in interpreting precisely what the naiveté means in this passage. He contends that this naiveté refers to the “unconscious” self-positing that characterizes the metaphysical past of man. Nietzsche, then, Heidegger contends, advocates the conscious embrace of this inescapable aspect of the human condition. Del Caro, however, has argued convincingly against this reading. Del Caro contends that Heidegger conflates two types of naivety as given in Nietzsche’s overall analysis of metaphysics. Human beings are naïve with respect to the origins of their moral, religious, and metaphysical interpretations. This, however, differs from the “hyperbolic naiveté” of positing the human itself as the meaning and measure of value in the world despite Heidegger’s claim to the contrary. In addition, Del Caro argues that Heidegger ignores many of the non-political aspects which characterize der Übermensch such as “refinement, affirmation, variety”, etc. Both of these points made by Del Caro highlight examples where Heidegger engages in selective reading to advance his own philosophical agenda. Not only does he ignore crucial evidence from the published writings but he also stretches the meaning of the selected Nachlass passage.

Storey, like Del Caro, criticizes many aspects of Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche. In fact, he devotes a whole chapter to Heidegger’s misinterpretation of Nietzsche, situating it within the context of Heidegger’s own treatment of nihilism. I focus here not on his summary of that

26 Del Caro, 144-5
27 Two other aspects of Del Caro’s critique warrant special mention. Del Caro, utilizing also the criticisms of Babette Babich, faults Heidegger for making too much of the infamous “Recapitulation” passage at WP: 617 when Nietzsche claims that the most supreme manifestation of der Wille zur Macht involves an “imprinting” of being onto becoming (Del Caro, 147-8; 253). The reader must interpret this passage in the light of Nietzsche’s consistently published critique of a static, rationally comprehended notion of being. Del Caro also highlights how Nietzsche anticipates Heidegger’s own later critique of technology at HAH I: 585 (Del Caro, 354).
28 Storey, 141-72
context, but specifically to his plausible defense of his claim that “Heidegger wrongly interprets Nietzsche’s views on the will to power, psychology, and value-theory anthropocentrically.”

First, Storey criticizes Heidegger for interpreting *der Wille zur Macht* by what, for Nietzsche, consists of but one of its many manifestations, specifically, the traits and characteristics of modernity, i.e. those which he refers to in his discussion of “the last men.” Nietzsche himself critiques these aspects of modernity. It seems as if then that Heidegger appropriates this critique and then levels it at Nietzsche himself without much of an interpretative argument in favor of this approach. Heidegger, at the very least, neglects or ignores Nietzsche’s discussion of the many different types of manifestation of power. Second, Heidegger incorrectly interprets Nietzsche as subscribing to the view that value is only there in the world because it is projected there by human beings. This fails to recognize that Nietzsche views all life as valuing. Storey thinks Nietzsche views value in a naturalistic manner, i.e. as coextensive with living creatures’ conditions of enhancement and preservation. Storey then rejects Heidegger’s insinuation that for Nietzsche values are but human projections in two senses. First, he rejects the suggestion that values are for Nietzsche peculiar to human beings. Second, he also puts pressure on the conception of a Nietzschean value as a “projection” rather than as an organic condition. Finally, Storey finds Heidegger’s attempt to locate Nietzsche as still trapped within the context of a modern, Cartesian subjectivity as unconvincing. He rightly thinks that this line fails to do justice to Nietzsche’s critique not only of the Cartesian ego but the traditional Western notion of the will. Here Heidegger is trying to make Nietzsche fit into his own meta-narrative of the

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29 Storey, 141
30 Storey, 167-9
31 Storey, 169-170
32 Storey, 159; 170-1
history of Western philosophy. This last Cartesian aspect of Heidegger’s commentary, however, warrants more critical attention, as I suggest and anticipate, at the end of this section.

I agree with the central criticisms above that Del Caro and Storey raise against Heidegger and here develop them further. In particular, Heidegger simply offers no decisive evidence to distinguish between a conscious and unconscious self-positing that bears on the WP 12 passage, especially as applied to Nietzsche who criticizes the superiority of consciousness.33 Nietzsche thinks that traditional philosophers overestimate the value and significance of consciousness, especially when it comes to the question of a flourishing life. Rather, healthy instincts matter much more for all forms of life, including human beings. Moreover, in this note Nietzsche pejoratively associates a “projection” of value with “certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination (emphasis added).” Nietzsche makes it quite clear that the “hyperbolic naiveté” he refers to consists in the presumptuousness of human beings positioning themselves at the center of meaning and value in the universe. Nietzsche also indicates earlier in the note that “pulling out” of the world would say nothing concerning its value.34

Suppose we realize how the world may no longer be interpreted in terms of these three categories {i.e. purpose, unity, and being or truth}, and that the world begins to become valueless for us after this insight: then we have to ask about the sources of our faith in these three categories. Let us try if it is not possible to give up our

33Miller, 71; GS: 11
34 Storey, though not addressing the passage in question explicitly (he must have it in mind though), makes the following insightful remarks about Nietzsche’s general position on “cosmological nihilism.”

So Nietzsche’s claim that the realization that the world has no meaning or value “in itself” is a calamity only against the background in which it is assumed to have one. It does not follow that there is no meaning or value, only that our prior estimations of it were largely a product of our own prejudices and were refracted through our anthropocentric prisms. (Storey, 163)
faith in them. Once we have devaluated these three categories, the demonstration
that they cannot be applied to the universe is no longer any reason for devaluing
the universe. (Emphasis added)\textsuperscript{35}

Finally, if “projection” is in fact the best way to think of Nietzschean values, Nietzsche
recognizes similar types of “projection” in non-human animals.\textsuperscript{36} Heidegger also does not here
mention any specific passages concerning his claims about der Übermensch (i.e. that the figure
of der Übermensch represents an exemplar of power who throws off the shackles of morality
and unapologetically wills the dominance of humanity over the earth). The main passage
utilized by Heidegger, then, not only does not support his reading, but Nietzsche also never
published the passage. Heidegger, then, does not convince that Nietzsche consciously and
resolutely affirms an axiological anthropocentrism.

Moreover, Heidegger also does not carefully distinguish between possible different
senses of both anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism. As sketched above, Heidegger seems
to think that every anthropomorphism results in axiological anthropocentrism, i.e. that the
anthropomorphic point of departure in human subjectivity which characterizes Western
metaphysics fosters an outlook towards things centered exclusively on human concerns. Though
this does not strictly follow, I do think Heidegger rightly suspects that if constructed human
conceptions of the world dictate some kind of human form as the repository of meaning itself,
then this likely tends to develop axiological anthropocentric attitudes. However, Heidegger does
not make this clear nor does he attribute this thought to its probable source for him, Nietzsche
himself. More precisely, as we shall see in chapter 2, Nietzsche more often argues to the effect

\textsuperscript{35} WP: 12
\textsuperscript{36} See, e.g., “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense” Section I, found in \textit{Writings from the Early Notebooks}. 
that metaphysical anthropocentrism and not anthropomorphism per se encourages axiological anthropocentrism. Finally, most importantly, Heidegger just simply ignores an abundance of evidence that Nietzsche clearly rejects axiological anthropocentrism.\textsuperscript{37} Nowhere does Nietzsche make this clearer than at \textit{Gay Science} 115 where he views this perspective as the third of four errors by which man educates himself: “he placed himself in a false rank order in relation to animals and nature.” Any interpretation, then, that would simply dismiss Nietzsche as some kind of anthropocentrist must reconcile that assertion with passages like the one quoted here in which Nietzsche clearly rejects metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism.

Heidegger, however, does raise important considerations for questioning whether or not Nietzsche manages to avoid anthropomorphism in his views on \textit{der Wille zur Macht}. Heidegger finds the most support for his construal of \textit{der Wille zur Macht} as an anthropomorphism at \textit{Beyond Good and Evil} 36 where Nietzsche describes the notion as referring to the “inner side” of a force, possibly indicating that he has in mind some kind of particularized mode of subjectivity. This line of thought, then, only seems to avoid the error of Descartes by decentralizing subjectivity and extending it to various centers in the unconscious processes of the body. This part of the Heideggerian reading deserves serious attention. I take this aspect of his reading up again in my chapter on Nietzsche’s conception of nature and reality below. Other commentators also interpret \textit{BGE} 36 in ways divergent from Heidegger, so it will inform much of the discussion to follow. Heidegger, recall, also indicates that Nietzsche thinks of power itself as a criterion of value. Nietzsche suggests, again at \textit{BGE} 36, that he views everything as manifesting

\textsuperscript{37} UM III: 5; HAH I: 42-3, 101, 111, 141, 233; II: 185; WS: 12, 14, 57, 304; D: 333, 424, 425, 547, 553; GS: 115, 220, 312, 346, 379; GM II: 21, GM III: 9; AC 14, 18, 43, EH: “Why I am a Destiny”, 8
der Wille zur Macht to a stronger or weaker degree. Certainly Nietzsche values certain manifestations of power over others (the writings of Goethe, say, over the ascetic ideals of priests). If, as Heidegger contends, Nietzsche simply and straightforwardly measures value by the extent to which something strongly manifests power itself, then Nietzsche thinks of everything in the world as manifesting a different degree of value. Furthermore, Nietzsche not only attributes value beyond the human species; he suggests that certain species of animals may possibly rank higher in terms of their manifestation of whatever requisite value informs his axiology.38 So, even granting that Heidegger understood Nietzsche correctly as viewing merely power itself as the criterion of value, this would not entail axiological anthropocentrism. I take up this issue, then, too, in discussing both Nietzsche’s conceptions of nature and value, in chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

B. Zimmerman’s Defense of Heidegger

Zimmerman, despite acknowledging Heidegger warrants criticism, agrees with his ultimate concern about how the alleged anthropocentrism in the teaching of der Übermensch indirectly implies an apology for man’s technological mastery of the planet.39 Zimmerman, unfortunately, does not engage the previous literature and only merely references the work of Hallman and Parkes. Zimmerman argues that Nietzsche’s “re-animalization of man” involves concern over breeding a higher type of human being, the only meaningful project that would ensure the “special status” of humanity after the death of God.40 Zimmerman sees this as

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38 GS: 115; AC: 14  
39 Zimmerman, 4; 22-6  
40 Zimmerman, 3-12; 17-22
Nietzsche’s primary goal for the future and ultimately what Nietzsche designates as a “return to nature,” a decisive contrast with the Romantic nostalgia inaugurated by Rousseau. Though the discoveries of modern science greatly diffuse an anthropocentric perspective (i.e. metaphysical anthropocentrism, though Zimmerman does not distinguish the view precisely as such), the human need to believe in a special human status practically outweighs an uncritical approval of this new demoted position of humanity in the cosmos.\(^{41}\) Zimmerman contends that Nietzsche’s view of science at the conclusion of the *Genealogy*, i.e. that it manifests the latest historical expression of the ascetic ideal, constitutes evidence that Nietzsche views the ascetic ideal in tandem with non-anthropocentrism.

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche famously argues that in its quest for truth at any cost, science shows itself as the secret ally of the ascetic ideal that Enlightenment science supposedly renounced. Nietzsche asks: “Does anyone really believe that the defeat of theological astronomy represented a defeat for that [ascetic] ideal?” (GM, III, 25) On the contrary, we read, science promotes man’s *self-belittlement* by destroying faith in his own “dignity and uniqueness, “‘his irreplaceability in the great chain of being…” Natural science has turned man into “an animal, literally and without reservation or qualification…” (GM, III, 25)\(^{42}\)

Zimmerman emphasizes that Nietzsche thinks of the human being as the truly exceptional animal capable of arranging the world for the enhancement of his or her own power.\(^{43}\) Echoing Heidegger, Zimmerman argues that Nietzsche views human beings as uniquely capable among living species to posit values and impose them onto the rest of the world by challenging his

\(^{41}\) Zimmerman, 4; 12-17\(^{42}\) Zimmerman, 13\(^{43}\) Zimmerman 17-20
readers to own up to the necessary preconditions of life, i.e. exploitation and appropriation.

Zimmerman interprets passages concerning future progress as calling for human beings to take up the domination of the planet so as to develop a higher human type.\textsuperscript{44} Proffering evidence for this claim, Zimmerman, for instance, turns to the \textit{Nachlass} in the fall of 1887, an unfinished sketch, where Nietzsche attributes the emergence of \textit{der Übermensch} as a “counter-movement” arising out of and against the overall self-mechanization of human beings in the modern economy.\textsuperscript{45} Hence, Zimmerman concludes his argument by defending the plausibility of Heidegger’s interpretation of \textit{der Übermensch}.\textsuperscript{46} He ends his piece with a barrage of rhetorical questions inviting the reader to envision how Nietzsche might assess contemporary environmentalists. Much of Zimmerman’s discussion, also, focuses on the potential illiberal underpinnings in radical forms of environmentalism. In this vein he criticizes the attitudes of environmentalists to minorities seeking the same advantages enjoyed by those who already benefit from the undiscerning proliferation of industry over and above environmental projects such as wilderness restoration.\textsuperscript{47}

I contend that Zimmerman’s attempt to rehabilitate aspects of the Heideggerian interpretation of Nietzsche ultimately fail. His omission of any discussion of Drenthen, Del Caro, Hallman, and Parkes explains much of the problem with his approach. He fails to engage with alternative interpretations of \textit{der Übermensch}, and like both Hallman and Acampora in particular, gives no contextual explanation for his use of certain passages from texts over others. Zimmerman quotes from every period in Nietzsche’s thought but without any explanation of their relationship to each other. Zimmerman does, however, flag interpretative problems for

\textsuperscript{44} Zimmerman 20-22  
\textsuperscript{45} KSA 12:10 [11]  
\textsuperscript{46} Zimmerman 22-26  
\textsuperscript{47} Zimmerman, 8-10
reading Nietzsche as a committed non-anthropocentrist. Nietzsche, like many thinkers of his day, stresses the significance of breeding in the development of future human beings, to be understood as primarily involving the dissemination of a certain type of culture so as to engender the requisite social structure for such a task. Much of Zimmerman’s discussion of this “re-animalization” of humanity focuses on associating Nietzsche with an eco-fascist strand in radical environmentalism. This, however, would place Nietzsche with the most extreme expressions of non-anthropocentrism and undermine Zimmerman’s own reading. Zimmerman also does not consider the possibility that Nietzsche actually could adhere to both anti-egalitarianism and non-anthropocentrism. If Zimmerman did consider this possibility he would not find himself in a false dilemma between viewing Nietzsche as a potential authoritative support for liberal environmentalism and viewing him as an apologist for environmental degradation, i.e. Heidegger’s position. Also, since “the human being must be overcome” whatever future potential status of humanity that Nietzsche might promote concerns the ability of a few stronger spirits to think through the non-human aspects of their environment. Zimmerman downplays this extent to which Nietzsche considers the non-human world and how he takes account of non-

48 Zimmerman’s position confusedly takes issue with certain aspects of environmentalism, namely non-liberal claims and practices (i.e. life on earth would be better off without human beings, ergo… etc.) that are consistent with construing Nietzsche as an environmentalist. However, what Zimmerman treats as integral features of this issue, i.e. the relation of environmental claims and practices to the liberal adoption of environmentalism do mark a meaningful contribution for showing how this interpretative debate concerning Nietzsche might resonate with philosophical discussion of the impending collision course between the spread of liberalism and the middle class to the “third world” and the ever-growing ecological crisis of the planet. Zimmerman, in his basic contention similar to Acampora’s to warn liberal environmentalists not to adopt Nietzsche as a source, points to a greater potential antinomy than that clarified by Drenthen on the tension between traditional environmental ethics and postmodern environmental philosophy, i.e. the potential fundamental antinomy between liberalism and environmentalism. Can the earth sustain billions of human beings making equal claims on one another, even if everyone came to affirm a necessary minimal role juxtaposed along the multitude of other claimants? Future interpretations on either of these aspects in Nietzsche’s work, i.e. his relationship to both liberalism and environmentalism, might evaluate their relation to one another, and whether or not this reveals telling problems about the relationship of them in their endangered political alliance today.

49 Acampora gestures in this direction in his article. See the next section below.

50 Compare, for example, GM III: 12 with EH: “Why I am a Destiny,” 5. Parkes, in his criticism of Acampora, emphasizes this refrain from Zarathustra; see footnote 69 below.
anthropocentric values amidst the plurality of perspectives in the world. In fact, Zimmerman glosses over several passages that he even quotes where Nietzsche critiques the mistreatment of animals,\textsuperscript{51} hubristic human attitudes towards nature,\textsuperscript{52} metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism,\textsuperscript{53} and reevaluates the comparison between humans and non-human animals more in favor to the latter.\textsuperscript{54} To Zimmerman’s credit, though, he does muster more textual evidence than Heidegger in favor of reading Nietzsche as affirming a future anthropocentric domination of the planet.\textsuperscript{55} However, none of these passages lend support to the specifically industrial and technological character of modernity, with the possible exception of the lone and unpublished \textit{Nachlass} passage from the fall of 1887.\textsuperscript{56} This late unpublished fragment does not, however, when juxtaposed against Nietzsche’s critiques of axiological anthropocentrism in the published writings warrant the weight attributed to it by Zimmerman. Nietzsche’s reader will certainly find more evidence that Nietzsche critiques the mechanization of humanity and the technological character of modernity.\textsuperscript{57}

C. Acampora: Nietzsche as a “Descriptively” Anthropocentric Elitist

As analyzed below in the section on Hallman, Acampora raises a series of criticisms (directed at Hallman) challenging any attempt to construe Nietzsche as an environmental thinker who contributes positively to environmental ethics, i.e. such an interpretative approach relies on

\textsuperscript{51} HAH I: 36, 53
\textsuperscript{52} GM III: 9
\textsuperscript{53} WS: 14; GS: 346
\textsuperscript{54} AC: 14
\textsuperscript{55} He utilizes primarily the following passages to build his case but gives no attention to either immediate context or their connection to one another: GS: 362; BGE: 208; WS: 189; GM II: 16; KSA 12:10 [11].
\textsuperscript{56} KSA 12:10 [11]
\textsuperscript{57} UM III: 6; HAH I: 481, 585; WS: 220, 279, 280, 284, 288; D: 206; GM III: 9
cherry picking from Nietzsche’s writings, cannot square with the descriptively anthropocentric elitism and individualistic, naturalistic transcendentalism of *der Übermensch*, and ignores Nietzsche’s acceptance and even affirmation of exploitation characteristic of *der Wille zur Macht*. Moreover, Acampora thinks that Nietzsche emphasizes the honest acceptance of this real exploitative aspect of human nature so strongly that he suggests that for Nietzsche this may imply “we accept all human impulses, including the technical, as thoroughly natural.”\(^{58}\)

Acampora, at the end of his article, however, qualifies his critique of finding a positive environmental ethical standpoint in Nietzsche. Acampora concedes the following two theses from Hallman’s article.\(^{59}\)

1. Nietzsche rejects the possibility of the existence of a transcendent world and criticizes traditional Western philosophical and religious thinking for being “otherworldly” and “anti-natural.”

2. Nietzsche rejects the human-nature dichotomy and criticizes traditional Western philosophical and religious thinking for being anthropocentric.\(^{60}\)

Acampora though counsels against using Nietzsche for environmental ethics beyond what these theses stipulate, and in this light views Nietzsche as a “high humanist” that “fosters an anthropic spirit of nobility that transcends the all-too-human and takes on responsibility for positively revaluing or uplifting (nonhuman as well as human) nature.”\(^{61}\)

Neither Hallman nor Acampora, however, fully distinguish between the different possible senses in which a philosopher might

\(^{58}\) Acampora, 193

\(^{59}\) Acampora, 194

\(^{60}\) Hallman, 100

\(^{61}\) Acampora, 194
reject anthropocentrism. Nonetheless, this concession to Hallman somewhat distances Acampora from Heidegger’s interpretation and places him closer to the center in the debate than his polemic might suggest.

Acampora views the interpretative dilemma, much too narrowly, as a choice between his construal of Nietzsche as both an elitist and individualist, or Hallman’s construal of Nietzsche as a biospheric egalitarian, i.e. “the view that all living things are alike in having value in their own right, independent of their usefulness to others.” Acampora raises the interesting interpretative possibility though that Nietzsche endorses elitism only as a matter of the social structure of a given species, while simultaneously affirming “eco-natural” holism, which Acampora defines vaguely as viewing all species on equal terms. Acampora sees this possibility as compatible with his position and moves towards endorsing this view in the course of his article. Acampora views Nietzsche, also, as a naturalistic transcendentalist (the latter term to be distinguished from the positions of both Kant and Emerson) which includes the endorsement of interpreting humanity as a natural phenomenon and valuing “the capacity of (some) humans to transcend or ‘make more’ of, their ordinary conditions.” For Acampora, Nietzsche values individuals as superior who overcome environmental factors that overly determine others subject to those same forces. Here Acampora emphasizes that Nietzsche is descriptively anthropocentric in that his discourse focuses on the society and culture of human beings. Despite his granting Nietzsche some kind of non-anthropocentrism, Acampora raises

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62 Hallman does, at one point in his article, however, single out specifically the issue of epistemological anthropocentrism. See Hallman, 111-12; 116.
63 See Brennan and Lo, section 3.1., for this definition of biospheric egalitarianism.
64 Acampora, 188
65 Acampora, 188-9
66 Acampora, 191
one of the more daunting interpretive challenges to viewing Nietzsche as endorsing some positive environmental ethos.

Lastly, “living fully in the natural world” may mean for Nietzsche that we accept all human impulses, including the technical, as thoroughly natural, maybe even that we can dare apocalyptically to affirm the will-to-powering drive of human artifice to the earthly extremity of techno-Armageddon. If our destiny could be so, then the ecologically relevant question begged by any appeal to amor fati must be: which lover? ---- for example, John Muir or Mad Max?67

This, of course, harkens back to the original Heideggerian charge but with a new twist, i.e. the project of affirming all of fate entails affirming the fated destructive, technical capacities of humanity.

Any attempt, then, to defend Nietzsche’s philosophy as a substantive contribution to environmental thought, particularly environmental ethics, must effectively contest Acampora’s overall argument, particularly this suggestion above about the theme of amor fati.

Drenthen raised the first criticism against Acampora in the debate. He claims that Acampora artificially divides the constructive and deconstructive aspects of Nietzsche’s thought.68 Acampora does this by warning against the positive ethical conception advanced by Nietzsche in the doctrine of der Übermensch69, on the one hand, but then concedes to Hallman Nietzsche’s deconstructive criticisms, i.e. the two theses above concerning traditional Western

67 Acampora 193
68 Drenthen (1999), 164
conceptions of nature and human nature: one, that Nietzsche criticizes the “otherworldly,” “anti-
natural” aspects of the Western emphasis on a transcendent world and, two, that he criticizes the
Western anthropocentric stress on a human-nature dichotomy. Acampora, though not giving a
complete analysis of anthropocentrism, could certainly maintain with strictly logical consistency
that Nietzsche critiques one form of anthropocentrism, say metaphysical anthropocentrism for
epistemic reasons, but endorse ethical anthropocentrism for moral reasons. However, a critique
of one form of anthropocentrism, at the very least, justifiably raises suspicions concerning other
kinds of anthropocentrism, since in both cases one worries about human-centeredness blinding
one to other considerations, whether epistemic or moral.70 Building on Drenthen’s suggestion, I
contend that Acampora at the very least betrays an unresolved tension in his interpretation.

Acampora maintains that Nietzsche endorses eco-natural holism vaguely defined as “viewing all
species on equal terms,” as consistent with his critique of anthropocentrism, but he strongly
suggests that his elitism outweighs any considerations of life beyond the human species.71
Acampora, however, neither adequately explains how Nietzsche can hold to both positions nor
substantiates this view with ample textual considerations. Moreover, this explanation requires
precisely the kind of unifying hermeneutic approach that Acampora accuses Hallman as failing
to offer in defense of his claims. Acampora’s polemic simply does not offer this approach, too.

Moreover, Acampora does not give sufficient evidence that Nietzsche uncritically pushes
for the proliferation of all impulses qua impulse, even human impulses advancing the
technological domination of the planet, in Nietzsche’s emphasis on amor fati. Del Caro also
views this criticism that Acampora raises about amor fati as an obvious misreading because it

70 Also, as I more fully develop the point in chapter 3, Nietzsche critiques morality, in part, on epistemic grounds
and not merely from the standpoint of axiology. See, in particular, D: Preface, 3, and 103.
71 Acampora 188-9
suggests a scenario that lacks any supporting evidence as juxtaposed against Nietzsche’s concern for the “meaning of the earth.”72 I agree that Acampora pushes a caricatured version of *amor fati*, but nonetheless a useful caricature. Nietzsche does, after all, intend his discussions of *amor fati*, the eternal recurrence of the same, and life-affirmation, to involve the personal existential challenge of stomaching the worst of reality. Charitable readings, however, require a reconciliation of Nietzsche’s ethical views regarding the long-term future73 and his critiques of many human impulses (e.g. the impulse to deny the body gratification because of viewing it as sinful or the impulse to treat an animal with cruelty) with a more nuanced version of his emphasis on life-affirmation. Nietzsche, in his emphasis on *amor fati*, likely aims to cultivate an affirmative psychological attitude towards all the circumstances beyond one’s control.74 I argue below in chapter 3 that, though not without ethical implications, Nietzsche views this affirmative response to reality primarily as an aesthetic experience. Moreover, Nietzsche never endorses an arbitrary employment of the passions or impulses but always views their healthy expression as subordinate to a higher cultural aim.75

Parkes raises another unique criticism against Acampora’s account, i.e. his comments concerning *der Wille zur Macht*. According to Parkes, Acampora underdetermines Nietzsche’s discussion of *der Wille zur Macht* by exclusively focusing on the exploitation by which Nietzsche characterizes living forces, certainly but just one manifestation of life.76 Besides, no scientific or philosophical discussion of life could avoid attending to the exploitation inherent in

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72 Del Caro, 133-4; Del Caro also criticizes Acampora for employing Hallman’s own egalitarian conception of the mutual interrelatedness of all living things against him as a “straw man” interpretative argument to distance Nietzsche from offering a positive ecological perspective on nature. Ironically, by distinguishing between Nietzsche’s position on human politics and his view on biological species, Acampora grants Nietzsche the resources to develop just such a perspective. Acampora, however, does not develop sufficiently any implications of this view.

73 See, e.g., HAH I: 22, 24-5, 38, 94, 234-5, 245, 292, 455, 477, 480-1 520; WS: 67, 188-9

74 See, e.g. GS: 276

75 A special thanks to John Nolt for suggesting this point.

76 Parkes (2005), 85
the evolutionary process. Parkes wrongly, and carelessly, contends that Nietzsche views exploitation as only particular to human beings but rightly contests that Nietzsche views this as the essence of *der Wille zur Macht*. I examine this notion in more detail in chapter 2.

Parkes, nor Acampora’s other critics, capture Acampora’s attempted nuanced position concerning anthropocentrism. Nonetheless, Acampora, like Heidegger and Zimmerman, does not fully specify in which ways Nietzsche manifests anthropocentrism and in which ways he commits to non-anthropocentrism. Acampora’s main contribution, however, consists in his suggested ascription to Nietzsche what he designates as “eco-natural holism,” (even if vaguely underdeveloped) which he views as somehow consistent with an elitism regarding human affairs.77

D. Drenthen: Nietzsche on the Radical Otherness of Nature

Drenthen holds a middle ground between taking an overly optimistic assessment of Nietzsche’s contribution to environmental thought and dismissing this prospect altogether. Drenthen thinks that Nietzsche can contribute specifically to understanding the tension and impasse between traditional environmental ethics and postmodern environmental philosophy. He characterizes this impasse as an argument on whether or not humans can conceive of nature in “non-domesticating ways”, i.e. whether or not all normative conceptions of nature derive from the unintended social construction of human meanings.78 The answer to such a question bears upon the possibility of developing a non-anthropocentric ethical conception of nature.

Normative conceptions of nature derived from the unintentional processes of human society may

77 I revisit the issue of holism briefly in Chapter 3 below.
78 Drenthen (1999), 165
always run the risk of smuggling in anthropocentric values. Basically, positions in traditional
environmental ethics argue for the possibility of a non-anthropocentric ethical conception of
nature in varying degrees whereas postmodern environmental philosophy rejects this possibility
outright because each normative conception of “nature and wildness (signifying a realm opposed
to culture)…function within the cultural project of trying to control and understand reality.”79
Normative conceptions of nature, on this view, always refer back to a specific set of human ends.
Drenthen doesn’t think that Nietzsche can reconcile these approaches per se but rather
anticipated this ambiguity between these two traditions in their current conceptions of nature.
Furthermore, their division appears as a symptom of this deeper unresolved ambiguity. Drenthen
thinks “that it is possible to bring these two approaches together, albeit not in a conciliatory
(pacifying) way.”80 In the light of his conclusion, Drenthen indicates that this possible
reconciliation means that both movements must “find new modes of thinking of nature that more
adequately reflect the ambivalent status of nature in our time.”81 Drenthen suggests that theorists
emphasize the aesthetic notion of “the sublime” as a possible route to such new modes of
thought.82 He does not, unfortunately, develop the notion of the “sublime” he has in mind, and
worries that this solution might recapitulate the original problem posed by post-modern
environmental philosophers, i.e. such a notion also emerges from the contingent historical
process of unintentionally developing conceptions of nature informed by the goals and purposes
of human society. The conception of the “sublime” then, too, might smuggle in unintentional
human aims or values. Drenthen certainly finds a different mode of understanding nature,
however, in the work of Nietzsche, i.e. a view of nature that despite the inevitability of nature’s

79 Drenthen (1999), 166
80 Drenthen (1999), 166
81 Drenthen (1999), 175
82 Drenthen (1999), 173-4
subjection to human interpretation always remains radically other than any given interpretation because of the acknowledged plurality of interpretations, and their essential plasticity.

Drenthen, then, argues that this conflict between these two philosophical approaches to normative conceptions of nature mirror the emphasis in Nietzsche on only knowing “interpretations of nature and never as it is in itself” and the “thesis regarding the universal struggle for power.” For Drenthen *der Wille zur Macht* refers to the “inner side” of physical forces, emphasizing the perspectivity characteristic of every force. Every interpretation of nature, then, particularly every moral interpretation, involves “a conceptual and practical seizure of power over nature.” Drenthen suggests, then, that for Nietzsche every morality codifies the actual struggle for power of a given set of natural forces, and also, that this struggle characterizes every such set. Drenthen, unfortunately, does not test this claim with examples. Certainly, one can the see potential application of his view to any position that advocates for re-engineering nature in some way, whether genetically modifying predators so as to eliminate predation, or developing technologies to cool the planet down and so mitigate against the effects of global warming (perhaps, ironically, because of the anthropogenic origin of climate change). However, he does not specifically address whether or not his view applies equally to quietist views like Taoism that emphasize letting nature take its own course, or any ethic built centrally around non-intervention. For Drenthen, Nietzsche’s position on *der Wille zur Macht* neither falls squarely within straightforward ontological naturalism (which purportedly anchors most conceptions of nature in traditional environmental ethics) nor within the compass of post-modern interpretations of nature. Against the former option of “naturalism,” Nietzsche’s theory “is a certain

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83 Drenthen (1999), 166
84 Drenthen (1999), 168
85 Drenthen (1999), 165
86 Drenthen (1999), 170
perspective aware of its own perspectival character.” According to Drenthen, then, Nietzsche can capture the insight of the post-modernists that all normative interpretations of nature run the risk of imposing human meanings onto nature. On the other hand, Nietzsche can, nonetheless, still register a moral concern for nature in his commitment to viewing nature as radically other than all human interpretations. Drenthen, however, does not explain what this moral concern for nature, presumably stripped of human interpretation, consists of despite its avoidance of “sheer indifference toward nature” and, of course, its attempt, with new modes of environmental thought, to neutralize the unintentional processes of imposing human interpretations. He implies, then, that these new modes of thought, first, raise awareness about latent domesticating meanings of nature that even infiltrate environmental ethical concern, and, second, somehow mitigate against these inevitable tendencies towards domestication by acknowledging the “radical otherness” of nature.

Parkes, however, contra Drenthen, contests ascribing to Nietzsche the view that human beings may only ever come to know merely interpretations of nature and never nature as it is in itself. Parkes disagrees with Drenthen primarily for three solid textual reasons. First, interpreters must take seriously Nietzsche’s task formulated as follows: “the dehumanizing of nature and then the naturalizing of the human, after it has attained the pure concept of ‘nature.’” Second, Nietzsche endorses the view that objectivity regarding reality increases by

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87 Drenthen (1999), 170
88 Drenthen (1999), 170
89 Drenthen does not give any direct textual support for this claim. Drenthen (1999), 173
90 Drenthen (1999), 173
91 Parkes (2005), 87-90
92 Parkes (2005), 87; KSA, 9:1[211]
virtue of the multiplicity of perspectives employed, i.e. entertaining as many perspectives as possible. Finally, Nietzsche advocates a practice similar to that of Daoist and Buddhist contemplative methodologies, i.e. “emptying the heart-mind” and “reducing attachments”, respectively. Nietzsche claims that “one can also practice reducing the force of the drives by reverting to the ‘dead’ {i.e. inorganic} world”, i.e. by unlearning some drives so as to “employ the entire abundance of one’s powers in looking.” Significantly, quoted texts that Parkes uses to support the latter two reasons involve Nietzsche advocating the taking up of a perspective apart from human relations or one’s humanity. Overall, Parkes makes a convincing case against Drenthen’s view despite his reliance primarily on the Nachlass and his retention of the overtly metaphysical phrase “in-itself.” In support of Parkes’ first reason, however, one can point to published passages, too. Nietzsche describes the first part of his task in the first edition of The Gay Science, at 109, in 1882. Nietzsche, then, in 1886, takes up the second part of the task in Beyond Good and Evil, at 230. I develop further this emphasis on what Nietzsche describes as his “task” in chapter 2, summarizing and explaining the significance of these passages in more detail.

Drenthen receives the most criticism, however, from Storey. Storey criticizes Drenthen for attributing to Nietzsche a vague and uninformative position akin to Heidegger’s emphasis on Gelassenheit, i.e. “letting things be”, particularly in Drenthen’s discussion of the sublime. Drenthen ignores how, according to Storey, Nietzsche anchors value in biological conditions of enhancement and preservation, claiming that Drenthen encourages, once again, an interpretation

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93 GM III: 12
94 Parkes (2005), 88; KSA 9:11[35]
95 KSA, 9:11[7]; KSA 9:11[35]
96 See my criticisms of Parkes’ usage of this phrase below in the section on Parkes.
97 Storey, 221
similar to Heidegger, i.e. values are only “projected” onto nature by human beings.98 Furthermore, if Drenthen’s view is correct, then Nietzsche certainly does not enable further meaningful philosophical progress on questions of action toward the environment.99 Also, like Parkes, Storey criticizes how Drenthen construes Nietzsche’s basic ontological commitments (or lack thereof). Storey notes Nietzsche’s concern, no doubt as a part of a commitment to naturalism, with ontological continuity from the inorganic to the organic, and the organic to the psychological. He argues that Drenthen ignores how Nietzsche attempts to present a unified ontological sense of affection and causality.100 Unlike Heidegger and the poststructuralists (which overly influence Drenthen’s interpretation), Nietzsche “is concerned to furnish a philosophical biology and a theory of evolution, whereas the latter tend to keep biology at arms’ length and analyze it as a discourse whose concepts have no actual referent and say more about us than they do about life itself.”101 Finally, though Nietzsche rejects any over-arching transcendent teleology and optimistic progressivist (natural) historical narratives, e.g. Hegel’s, Nietzsche nonetheless thinks of being in terms of hierarchical “development.”102 In many ways, Storey presents decisive criticisms against the continental reception and (mis)appropriation of Nietzsche---, i.e. from Heidegger to poststructuralism--- precisely because they fail to take seriously Nietzsche’s philosophical employment of the natural sciences, in particular, biology. I discuss this issue further below in the section on Storey’s own interpretation.

In fact, Drenthen concedes too much to the poststructuralist emphasis on the boundless perspectivity registered in Nietzsche’s notion of der Wille zur Macht, as if construing it as an

\[98\] Storey, 221
\[99\] Storey, 221-2
\[100\] Storey, 223-4 Storey, in particular, focuses on BGE: 36.
\[101\] Storey, 224
\[102\] Storey, 224
epistemic notion. Perhaps Nietzsche’s view does face epistemic worries, but in nearly every discussion of the notion, he offers it as a hypothetical explanation of the recurrent features in the experience of the natural phenomena under discussion, i.e. of human societies, the nature of all life, or the chaotic forces at work throughout the cosmos. Nietzsche then views his theory as an interpretation of the empirical facts of nature qua experience as revealed by the sciences, neither as a metaphysical explanation of the hidden essence of those experiences nor as merely an epistemological theory of perspectivity. Though not advancing an epistemological theory, Nietzsche does advocate interpretations built upon the incorporation of as many perspectives as possible. Drenthen also ignores crucial aspects of der Wille zur Macht, such as the emphasis on superabundance and discharge.\textsuperscript{103} Emphasis on these aspects raises suspicions about construing der Wille zur Macht as perpetually involving a seizure of power as if power itself were not already a given in the configuration of a certain kind of force. Drenthen also does not consider the possibility that the critique of all moralities construed as systems of non-negotiable imperatives may prove consistent with a given ethical position, particularly a position with substantive claims concerning the promotion of optimal environmental conditions for life itself. A specific concern with favorable conditions of flourishing need not result in the imposition of imperatival dictates of the sort that may always involve the power seizure with which, Drenthen claims, Nietzsche characterizes all morality. In fact, in chapter 3, I take up such an interpretation of Nietzsche’s critique of morality and how it does not apply to his own positive ethical vision.

E. Del Caro’s Study of Nietzsche’s “Earth Rhetoric”: Nietzsche on the Meaning of the Earth

\textsuperscript{103} See, e.g., BGE: 13.
Del Caro, despite his persuasive criticisms of Heidegger and Acampora and his endorsement of a positive Nietzschean, environmental ethos takes a fairly modest position past Drenthen’s skepticism, particularly regarding the issue of anthropocentrism. Del Caro’s Nietzsche certainly and overtly criticizes the anthropocentric tendencies in human beings’ relation to nature. However, Nietzsche, on his view ultimately recognizes the inevitability of such tendencies and looks to work from within an anthropocentric perspective. Del Caro, like the authors above, does not distinguish between various senses of anthropocentrism.

Del Caro extensively treats the entire corpus of Nietzsche’s work. His particularly persuasive treatments of The Birth of Tragedy, Human, All-Too Human, and Thus Spoke Zarathustra, respectively, however, make the most convincing case that the human being’s relation to nature centers Nietzsche’s set of concerns throughout each period--- early, middle, and late--- of his philosophy. Del Caro draws on many passages from The Birth of Tragedy in his explication of the feeling of immanence, i.e. a feeling of liveliness and meaning taken in one’s sensory experience of the earth, which Nietzsche champions throughout his career. In particular, he focuses on the description Nietzsche gives of the Dionysian festival and the significance he attributes to the mythological figure of the satyr. For its participants, the ancient festival culminates in an ecstatic sense of union with the earth and the rest of the community. Del Caro effectively draws this feature of the festival out from the text in noting that, for Nietzsche, aesthetic value and its sense of transfiguring fullness derive from nature itself.

The earth gives forth milk and honey, humans feel like gods and are no longer artists but have become artwork: “The artistic power of all nature reveals itself here amidst shudders of frenzy to the highest blissful gratification of the primal

104 Del Caro, 71-3; 81-8
unity” (BT 1, KSA 1:30). Stripped of its artistic metaphysical semantics, the experience of the Dionysian festivals describes an at-oneness with the earth. No effort is required here to manifest a human presence as an act of reclaiming, because the distinction between human and animal is suspended, powerless --- all life is sucked into the vortex of primal unity, all life forms participate uninhibitedly in expressions of their vitality.\textsuperscript{105}

Unpacking the Dionysian, then, results in several key insights. Nature aesthetically influences human beings in a profound way so as to provoke a sense of unity with nature. Del Caro also effectively notes how from early in his career Nietzsche challenges any fundamental distinction between human and non-human animals. The satyr, for instance, represents a reconciliation with the earth in that the fictional figure joins together human-like qualities and a primitive sense of animalistic traits signifying a physical connection with the rest of nature.

\textit{Human, All- Too Human}, for Del Caro Nietzsche’s first truly independent work, in addition to anticipating Heidegger’s critique of technology (see section A above and footnote 13), marks what Del Caro characterizes as a revaluation of the quotidian.\textsuperscript{106}

There is a growing sense of affirmation and accommodation of the little things in \textit{Human, All Too Human}, with its often impressionistic descriptions of the immanence we experience daily.\textsuperscript{107}

Nietzsche attaches great hygienic and aesthetic significance to one’s experience of her environment, in particular to one’s life outdoors, adaptation to climate, giving more thought to

\textsuperscript{105} Del Caro, 71-2  
\textsuperscript{106} Del Caro, 29-31  
\textsuperscript{107} Del Caro, 30
food, clothing, and shelter. In fact, these aspects of life get neglected in the disproportionate value ascribed to the supposed metaphysical qualities of human nature in the attempt to define the human being as some kind of exclusively moral being transcendent of environmental conditions. Nietzsche aims then to parry this neglect with his critique of metaphysics and his focus on “the closest things.”¹⁰⁸ In fact, Del Caro thinks that this neglected theme in Nietzsche partially accounts for mistaken caricatures of Nietzsche, which he effectively criticizes.

Again, these dimensions of Nietzsche’s thought do not resonate well with readers and commentators who want their Nietzsche heroic, Faustian, and snarling with contempt ---- but these are the same elements from which Nietzsche in the second and final part of the second volume of Human will construct his notion of great health, his new hygiene.¹⁰⁹

For Del Caro, this theme constitutes Nietzsche’s novelty and centrally informs the rest of his work.

Finally, in his analysis of Zarathustra, Del Caro attends to Nietzsche’s philosophical and artistic project of reorienting and redirecting meaning and value back to the planet after millennia of placing them beyond it in some otherworld.¹¹⁰ The plot, diction, content, and style of the work all manifest rhetorical and dramatic elements that capture a heightened experience of the natural world. In particular, his treatment of the Prologue, the speeches on the body and the bestowing virtue, and the plot features of Part III, all reveal the passionate philosophical quest of Nietzsche to reinvigorate an appreciation for the human habitation of the planet as the

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¹⁰⁸ Del Caro, 104-9
¹⁰⁹ Del Caro, 30
¹¹⁰ (in particular) Del Caro, 55-62
foundational ground of human meaning. Del Caro calls attention to how Nietzsche, from the beginning of the work, explicitly expresses its unifying task to bring “meaning to the earth.”

The human is something that must be overcome, we are told, and now that the superhuman is the meaning of the earth, our will should say: the superhuman shall be the meaning of the earth. The imperative now is to remain faithful to the earth; earlier the greatest sin was sacrilege against god, now sacrilege against the earth is most terrible, and esteeming the bowels of the inscrutable higher than the meaning of the earth. The human being is a polluted stream, and it needs a sea to take it in and cleanse it without itself becoming unclean, and the superhuman is this sea. (Z P/3, KSA 4:14-15).

Del Caro recapitulates here the telling refrains of the Prologue. Building then on his analysis, note that in the content of the Prologue, juxtaposed by Del Caro, the aim of the task centers on the planet itself. Del Caro, in particular, notes the imperatival language regarding the earth. Nietzsche calls for faithfulness to the earth and also designates “sacrilege against the earth” instead of God as the ultimate “sin.” These declarations provide context for the more frequently quoted proclamation that der Übermensch “shall be the meaning of the earth.” Del Caro favors interpretations of der Übermensch that emphasize what Daniel Conway describes as a kind of “human being who actually advances the frontier of human perfectability.” Del Caro thinks, then, of der Übermensch as a perfecting of the despised and forgotten animal qualities of humanity denigrated by the Western tradition and a human being who lives a revalued quotidian life. Del Caro implies that Zarathustra expresses the theme of the revaluation of the quotidian

111 Del Caro, 55
112 Del Caro, 50; Conway, 20
113 Del Caro, 408-12; 424f.
begun in *Human* and, also, returns to the Dionysian connection with nature inaugurated in *The Birth of Tragedy* stripped of its metaphysical language.

The elevated status of human beings and their closest possible connection to the earth is what *The Birth of Tragedy* is all about, and the same can be said of the superhuman, the free spirits, or other higher types. The phrase from *Tragedy* which includes “existence…world…justified” is another formulation of “the superhuman is the meaning of the earth” --- the components are the same; existence = superhuman, world=earth, justified=meaning. Stripped of its rhetoric, the Zarathustra phrase offers a nonmetaphysical version of the *Tragedy* phrase.114

Del Caro, then, suggests that Nietzsche ultimately calls for human beings to redirect their attention to the body and the surrounding physical environment and so overcome the all-to-human--- i.e. unique human pathologies--- of placing meaning and value someplace else. The interpretations put forth on these texts note Nietzsche’s consistent philosophical objectives despite the radical transformations of his philosophy during the transitions of each period.

Like the parties to the debate above, Del Caro makes substantive interpretative claims on Nietzsche’s major doctrines: *der Wille zur Macht, der Übermensch*, and, additionally, *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. Del Caro justly distances the conception of nature embodied in Nietzsche’s notion of *der Wille zur Macht* from the anthropocentric conceptions of nature in Romanticism and emphasizes its distinctive hue, i.e. a stress on the indifference and superabundance of nature and conceiving of forces as discharging their strength or excess.115 Del Caro also cautions against importing “anthropocentric” notions of power in the interpretation

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114 Del Caro, 50
115 Del Caro, 320-9
of this idea.\textsuperscript{116} As for the issue of anthropomorphism, Del Caro clearly rejects interpretations that construe \textit{der Wille zur Macht} as anthropomorphic but does not explicitly offer any contrary view on this question.\textsuperscript{117} He does, however, early in his book, associate the conception with Nietzsche’s project of returning to \textit{nature naturelle}, “a description of nature as the ground, nature not anthropomorphized.”\textsuperscript{118} As for \textit{der Übermensch}, Del Caro describes the formation of the notion as an inevitable anthropocentric process but contends that the association of “the meaning of the earth” with this idea from a thinker concerned with earth- and life-affirmation tells against an extreme anthropocentrism that views everything as instrumental to human drives for power.\textsuperscript{119} Del Caro, however, takes anthropocentrism as, for Nietzsche, an unavoidable aspect of human cognition and the positing of values.\textsuperscript{120}

Del Caro interprets the other major \textit{Zarathustra} doctrine, \textit{die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen}, in the light of the revaluation of the quotidian.

\begin{quote}
Nietzsche expects us to affirm the closest things (body, passions, the finite, earth, the quotidian) by means of the ERS (i.e. the eternal recurrence of the same).”\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

This is why, also, in contradistinction to nearly all other interpreters of the idea he puts more weight on explicating what Nietzsche means by \textit{Gleichen}. Del Caro implies that Nietzsche invites his reader to, through the “cultivating thought” of the prospect of the recurrence of the \textit{identical} features of one’s body, passions, etc., to foster an enhancement of life. The “ideal” of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{116}] Del Caro, 99-100
\item[\textsuperscript{117}] Del Caro, 64-5, 255 n. 359
\item[\textsuperscript{118}] Del Caro, 64
\item[\textsuperscript{119}] Del Caro, 100
\item[\textsuperscript{120}] Del Caro, 100; 204; 324; 360
\item[\textsuperscript{121}] Del Caro, 251
\end{itemize}
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the thought then consists in a healthy, vital life joyfully affirming its own identical sets of
contingencies, i.e. the quotidian features of life.

Del Caro offers reliable and defensible interpretations of Nietzsche’s major doctrines.
However, Del Caro does not advance in any considerable detail his views concerning the
problems of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism, respectively, independent of his
engagement with the previous literature. I think his interpretation of *der Wille zur Macht*,
however, points in the right direction for a possible defense of the view that Nietzsche takes
himself to offer a defensible and articulate non-anthropomorphic conception of reality.
Nietzsche views the problem of anthropomorphism as a troubling problem from early on in his
career and uses his conception of nature as a platform by which to criticize other conceptions of
nature for uncritically accepting and endorsing anthropomorphic features. On the other hand, I
question whether or not Nietzsche takes anthropocentrism as an inevitable aspect of cognition
and the positing of values. The critical pitch in Nietzsche against anthropocentrism weighs
against accepting this view uncritically. In chapter 2 I defend the view that Nietzsche certainly
critiques metaphysical anthropocentrism which informs the discussion of his critique of
axiological anthropocentrism, primarily taken up in chapter 3. Also, given Nietzsche’s view that
objectivity consists of the incorporation of as many perspectives as possible, it seems plausible
that Nietzsche does not think an anthropocentric perspective an unavoidable feature of human
cognition.\(^{122}\) However, Del Caro decisively establishes the significance and priority that
Nietzsche assigns to one’s experience of the natural world. Primarily he emphasizes the theme
of the Dionysian immanent connection with nature that begins in *Birth* and culminates in
*Zarathustra*. The revaluation of animality, both human and otherwise, closely accompanies this

\(^{122}\) GM III: 12
theme. He also calls attention to the neglected theme of the quotidian. By locating the revaluation of the quotidian, along with an experienced aesthetic connection with nature, at the core of Nietzsche’s philosophy, this interpretation singles out the topic of how human beings experience their environment as an authentic Nietzschean concern.\(^\text{123}\)

F. Storey: Nietzsche as a Hierarchical Biocentrist

Storey’s interpretation of Nietzsche consists of three main aspects: a critique of Heidegger, a critique of the existing literature on Nietzsche’s relation to environmental ethics, and third, an argument in favor of construing Nietzsche as a hierarchical biocentrist. I already summarized his criticisms of Heidegger above so I proceed to his critique of the existing literature and his positive construal of Nietzsche’s hierarchical biocentrism as the ethical component of a nonreductive naturalism.

Storey levels three fundamental criticisms to all parties in the debate (Storey, unfortunately, does not address Del Caro’s monograph). First, the existing literature either ignores or downplays Nietzsche’s philosophical biology. Second, it does not adequately address

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\(^{123}\) Del Caro, also, overall, offers the most comprehensive treatment of all the relevant literature on the environmental themes in Nietzsche’s philosophy including, notably, the reception of important studies in German relevant to these issues. In particular, the work of both Rudolph Kreis and Stephan Günzel on Nietzsche’s views on religion and his use of the social sciences, respectively, support the view that Nietzsche held both a deep reverence for the earth and that he thought environmental conditions for human flourishing one of the most important topics of ethical consideration. I think, however, that Del Caro overestimates the influence on this topic by Laurence Lampert, apart from Lampert’s perceptive treatment of Zarathustra. Lampert anticipates some of the themes from Zarathustra that Del Caro himself treats, e.g. the significance of Nietzsche’s critique of otherworldly metaphysics for viewing him as an environmental thinker, but I see Lampert’s focus on situating Nietzsche with respect to the history of philosophy. This contribution is substantial and not irrelevant to evaluating Nietzsche as an environmental thinker, but other scholars, including Del Caro himself, more directly and explicitly address this issue. Del Caro, 114-15
Nietzsche’s theory of natural value which he develops out of his philosophical biology. Third, it ignores or misunderstands his conception of natural hierarchy.\textsuperscript{124}

Storey, highly influenced by the work of John Richardson on Nietzsche’s philosophical biology, argues that Nietzsche, despite his misunderstandings of Darwin and tendency towards Lamarckism, actually prefigures some important trends in contemporary theoretical biology important for a nonreductive naturalism.\textsuperscript{125} First, Nietzsche views organisms as “relatively stable configurations of drives that in some sense produce themselves.”\textsuperscript{126} This aspect of his view anticipates the similar contemporary autopoietic conception of the organism exemplified by two important scientific advances beyond 19\textsuperscript{th} century biology. Storey quotes the biophenomenologist Evan Thompson to summarize these advances.

Two kinds of scientific advances have been decisive. The first advance is the detailed mapping of molecular systems of self-production within living cells. We are now able to comprehend many ways in which genetic and enzymatic systems within a cell reciprocally produce one another. The second advance is the invention of mathematical concepts and techniques for analyzing self-

\textsuperscript{124} Storey, 217  
\textsuperscript{125} For a contrasting account, which firmly situates Nietzsche’s philosophical biology as confined within his historical context, see Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor by Gregory Moore, especially pgs. 1, 16, and 21-55. Moore gives a thorough and exhaustive study of Nietzsche’s historical context, in particular on theorists employing concepts of evolution and degeneration. However, Moore, apart from providing great evidence for particular influences on Nietzsche, such as Ernst Haeckel, William Rolph, and Wilhelm Roux, does not provide on overall hermeneutic approach to Nietzsche’s texts. He rather liberally draws from the Nachlass and jumps from one chronological context to the next without sufficiently orienting the reader to the place of the quoted passage within the given text. Overall, then, the work masterly treats the larger context of Nietzsche’s production but rather cavalierly glosses over the details of Nietzsche’s published writings. This leads him rather quickly to dismiss Nietzsche’s notion of \textit{der Wille zur Macht} as an instance where Nietzsche simply falls into anthropomorphism, which he acknowledges that Nietzsche criticizes elsewhere. His approach, then, to Nietzsche’s writings appears at times to be merely historical without much attention given to philosophical interpretation.  
\textsuperscript{126} Storey, 201
organization in nonlinear dynamic systems… Many scientists now believe these are necessary principles of biological self-organization.¹²⁷

Second, Nietzsche anticipates how Kant’s largely Newtonian view of matter would be superseded. Kant thinks that only when natural phenomena are explained by mechanistic laws rationally consistent with the “universal and necessary structure that issues from the categories of the understanding” is a determinate, scientific cognition achieved.¹²⁸ Kant does not think of biological phenomena amenable to this type of cognition. He then places biology outside of the scope of science and best explained through reflective judgment. Nietzsche, on the other hand, never tires from critiquing the mechanistic, inert conception of matter. Nietzsche rather views matter as a chaotic, dynamic system of points of force or as mutually resistant discharges of energy. Once again, Storey draws from Thompson to explain his interpretation.

As Thompson explains,

Our conception of matter as essentially equivalent to energy and as having the potential for self-organization at numerous spatiotemporal scales is far from the classical Newtonian worldview. In particular, the physics of thermodynamically open systems combined with the chemistry and biology of self-organizing systems provides another option that is not available to Kant: life is an emergent order of nature that results from certain morphodynamical principles, specifically those of autopoiesis.

¹²⁷ Thompson, 139; Storey 200-1
¹²⁸ Storey, 189-190
Though he did not have access to the science we do, it seems that Nietzsche’s basic intuition that mechanism would be superseded by a “dynamic interpretation of the world” centered on quanta of energy was generally correct.\textsuperscript{129}

Doubtless, one should be on guard against overstatement and anachronism here, including Storey’s appeal to the work of Richardson, who interprets Nietzsche primarily as attempting to modify, rather than criticize, Darwin. Nor should one forget that Nietzsche’s work in these areas was mostly speculative, tentative, and exploratory. Nietzsche’s ideas in these areas were based on his own reading and interpretation of the natural sciences and his willingness to speculate and hypothesize about potential further developments based on that knowledge, and not a rigorous application of the scientific method. Nietzsche’s experimentalism in philosophical thinking should not be confused with scientific experimentation. Nonetheless, none of what I say here rules out the possibility that Nietzsche, precisely because of his perspective as an outsider on many different competing theories at the time, was able to make some insightful observations and anticipations about the direction of future science. We should not exaggerate, nor underestimate, Nietzsche as a philosopher of science.

Finally, Nietzsche attributes some kind of “thin intentionality” to all organisms which, despite his critique of any over-arching transcendent sense of teleology, underwrites an “immanent,” emergent teleology as fundamental to the ontological status of life.\textsuperscript{130} Storey views Nietzsche as attempting to articulate a conception of life that avoids the polar extremes of both mechanism and vitalism or panpsychism. Nietzsche explains biological phenomena in terms of

\textsuperscript{129} Thompson, 140; Storey, 201 See also Heisenberg’s critique of Kant at 86-92. Heisenberg also demonstrates awareness of Nietzsche’s lectures on the “pre-Platonic” philosophers where Nietzsche develops a speculative interpretation of physical reality.

\textsuperscript{130} Storey, 201-2
drives, which evince a very primitive, non-cognitive sense of directedness towards ends. This conception of life, then, provides Nietzsche the resources for a theory of natural value.

Storey agrees with Richardson in viewing Nietzschean drives as “plastic dispositions” rather than merely “blind mechanisms.” A system of drives sets up an inherently creative system with the external environment, and it is in this very thin sense of an automatic response system to external factors, that Storey and Richardson view Nietzsche as attributing a primitive kind of intentional and interpretative dimension to the living organism. Nietzsche appears to take for granted, like contemporary biology, that living organisms are functional systems of organization. These functional systems inherently manifest valuing perspectives. Story holds that “it is beyond dispute that he held valuing to be an inherent activity of all living things, saying, ‘Valuations lie in all functions of the organic being.’” Storey gives a succinct, clear interpretative argument on this point worth quotation.

There are no “values in themselves” or entities with values as “properties”--- there is only valuing activity. For Nietzsche, activity as such is already evaluative. Valuing, for him, is not merely aesthetic or moral, but ontological; it is not merely something beings sometimes do and sometimes don’t---it is something they are. If beings are composed of nothing but drives, and all drives value, then beings value intrinsically; the drives that dominate will determine what the being values. So, contrary to the projectionist thesis, Nietzsche does reserve a place for the “reality” of values.

131 Storey, 210
132 KSA 11.26[72]; Richardson, 73; Storey, 208-9
133 Storey, 209
Furthermore, Nietzsche’s theory of natural value suggests that more complex organisms, which function through the incorporation of ever more complex arrangements of drives, naturally increase their total extent of value. This in turn supports a hierarchical biological axiology.

Storey criticizes the literature, in particular Hallman and Acampora, for creating a false dilemma in assessing Nietzsche as an environmental thinker (Del Caro anticipates this criticism and interpretative assessment134).

The underlying problem here, in my view, is that Hallman and Acampora share a common prejudice: a one-sided view of hierarchy. Hallman tries to airbrush it out of Nietzsche’s view, while Acampora thinks that it vitiates seeing Nietzsche as an environmental thinker. The assumption seems to be that an “environmentally correct” outlook has to espouse a nonhierarchical view of the human-nature relationship and that hierarchy inherently implies domination and exploitation.135

Storey, alternatively then, attributes to Nietzsche a hierarchical biocentric position--- roughly, the view that all living things have some value, but that some values are greater than others based on the ability of the organism to realize ever more complex types of value, and that ethical decision making should honor these hierarchical differences. Furthermore, Storey argues that this view is characterized by three distinctive strengths.

134 See, for example, the following representative claim from his evaluation of Hallman and Acampora. Nor do I see why maintaining a pathos of distance would necessarily rule out greater connectedness with the environment --- Acampora’s conception of interconnectedness may be too simple, too much based on an egalitarian notion of human beings standing in a circle holding hands, when in fact, Nietzsche’s concept of the pathos of distance may have the effect of bringing humans closer to their natural environment by virtue of cutting through idealism, wishful thinking, patronizing, anthropocentric and Romanticized conceptions of nature (Del Caro, 133). See also 407, 414

135 Storey, 220-1
A hierarchical biocentrism can avoid both the problems of axiological and ethical anthropocentrism while also providing a “check against the misanthropy that can sometimes creep into nonanthropocentric discourse.” Ethicists need not think that embracing biocentrism entails an eco-fascist perspective, in which invoking environmental concerns legitimates minimizing or outweighing all human interests.

Second, even the lowest life form has value that “must be acknowledged in order to preserve the ontological continuity between humans and the rest of life” but humans have greater value because they realize greater value. Hierarchical biocentrism recognizes the ethical significance of all life, i.e. that values, and so the real stuff of ethical significance, emerges with the first primitive living organisms. This view also recognizes that certain forms of life embody more value, such as chimpanzees, dolphins, and, of course, human beings.

Finally, the relationship between higher and lower forms of life is not merely exploitative but may naturally manifest a system in which the “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” or “ecological value” of each link in the chain is best realized. Storey implies that “intrinsic value” can be reinterpreted as the value that a living organism realizes as part of its own functional system, in the case of Nietzsche then, through its own system of drives. “Extrinsic or ecological value” then refers to the value the living organism produces for other living organisms or for an entire ecological system. Since, as David Ray Griffin notes, lower forms of life with less intrinsic value often confer greater ecological benefits, and vice versa, higher forms of life with more intrinsic value do not confer greater ecological benefits, a hierarchical biocentrism like

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136 Storey, 228
137 Storey, 229
138 Storey, 230
Nietzsche’s can capture both the insight that all life matters and that more advanced complex species with greater diversification of drives matter more in a particular way.¹³⁹

Like the other parties to the discussion, Storey also does not address different senses of anthropocentrism. He also does not address long-term aspects of Nietzsche’s view. Nonetheless, Storey makes a very plausible case for his reading of Nietzsche. He rightly redirects the debate to the issue of naturalism. He provides great support for understanding Nietzsche’s axiology as grounded upon his philosophical biology. He also clearly articulates a convincing argument against deciding on Nietzsche’s relationship to environmental ethics based on how one situates him with respect to biocentric egalitarianism. He also articulates the potential relevance of Nietzsche to environmental ethical discussion by presenting the merits of a hierarchical biocentric position. Storey, however, while providing textual support for his interpretation of Nietzsche’s axiology, does not provide adequate evidence that Nietzsche applies that axiology in ethical directives toward non-human species. However, as I show in chapter 3, such evidence is not absent in Nietzsche’s writings. Storey, surprisingly, does not touch on passages where Nietzsche appears to suggest a conception of species welfare. His account implies that individual living organisms are what matters to Nietzsche. A biocentric individualist may coherently employ a conception of species welfare, explained as an aggregate of the welfare of the individual members of that species. Nonetheless, Storey’s implied ascription of biocentric individualism to Nietzsche, at the very least, requires a further argument with textual support.

To the credit of Storey, this objection does not threaten the recommended interpretative approach of making sense of Nietzsche’s biocentric language as hierarchical. In fact, Storey presents a decisive case for understanding Nietzsche as a hierarchical biocentrist. Interpretative tasks

¹³⁹ Griffin, 192-3; 203; Storey 232-33
remain on how to best flesh out this reading. Nonetheless, Storey’s monograph advances the discussion forward. He, like Del Caro, shows that the direction towards Heidegger leads to a dead end. Storey also makes decisive criticisms against both Acampora and Drenthen. Dialectically, Storey’s publication certainly tilts meaningful future discussion of Nietzsche’s axiology away from anthropocentric readings and more to what really fascinates Nietzsche, life itself.

G. Hallman: Nietzsche as a Deep Ecologist

In “Nietzsche’s Environmental Ethics” Hallman argues for the following four theses regarding Nietzsche’s relation to the environment in his attempt to “exonerate” Nietzsche from Heidegger and interpret Nietzsche as a deep ecologist, i.e. a proponent of biospheric egalitarianism, “the view that all living things are alike in having value in their own right, independent of their usefulness to others,”\textsuperscript{140} and that this in some way involves identifying one’s self with the rest of nature.

1. Nietzsche rejects the possibility of the existence of a transcendent world and criticizes traditional Western philosophical and religious thinking for being “otherworldly” and “anti-natural.”

2. Nietzsche rejects the human-nature dichotomy and criticizes traditional Western philosophical and religious thinking for being anthropocentric.

\textsuperscript{140} Brennan and Lo, section 3.1.
3. Nietzsche recognizes the importance of environmental factors and formulates, in *der Wille zur Macht*, a principle that explains change immanently and that suggests the interrelatedness of all living things.

4. Nietzsche calls for a kind of “return to nature”--- a return whereby the anti-natural tendencies of traditional Western thinking are dispossessed.141

For thesis 1, Hallman highlights the usages of the pejorative terms referred to in this claim in Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity beginning with *Daybreak* and culminating in *The Anti-Christ*.142 Hallman first prefaces this move by claiming that this thesis anticipates Lynn White Jr.’s critique of “mainstream Christianity” (excluding the Greek Orthodox tradition and notable exceptions like St. Francis of Assisi) for heavily contributing to the current ecological crisis by providing a theoretical foundation for the dominant technological and industrial trends that fostered this problem.143 White correctly attributes to this mainstream tradition the view that God grants humanity the usage of nature for its own ends and that the human being is something intrinsically higher than the rest of nature.144 Hallman argues convincingly that Nietzsche anticipates these criticisms, particularly when he notes that Nietzsche as early as *Daybreak* criticizes Christianity “for denigrating the Earth by instilling in human beings the feeling that ‘at bottom they are too good and too significant for the earth and are paying it only a passing

141 Hallman, 100-1
142 Hallman, 103-4
143 Hallman, 101-3
144 This line of historical interpretation also bears comparison with Max Weber’s thesis that the Protestant Reformation contributed to the development of capitalism in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. One might add to this line that, through this development of capitalism, then, it also gave rise to the crassness of market attitudes towards appropriation and self-satisfaction, particularly regarding food, not to mention, perhaps because of the loss and displacement of many medieval guilds and artisans, the aesthetic senselessness involved in the amount of time, money, and energy wasted on the stupid items available to consumers like the ab-hancer and the boyfriend arm pillow. See, e.g. http://removeandreplace.com/2013/05/28/ridiculous-products-stupid-strange-funny-and-weird-things-you-can-actually-buy/.
visit.” Hallman also nicely captures the significance of Nietzsche’s critique of the immortal soul.

Perhaps the most important of these {i.e. “specific consequences of Christian thinking”} is that the Christian dichotomy between humanity and nature has often served as the foundation for unabashed anthropocentrism, or, to use Nietzsche’s words, for “an insane self-elevation of man above the world.” As Nietzsche often points out, one outcome of this “insane self-elevation” is the belief in a substantial self, subject, or soul that endures over time and that is taken to be immortal. According to Nietzsche, the belief in the existence of the immortal self or soul is simply a means by which an individual may realize a sense of disproportionate self-importance and, in accordance with orthodox Christian thinking that only human beings have immortal souls, it has traditionally served as a justification for attributing such disproportionate importance to the entire human species.146

Hallman, thus, supports with textual evidence that not only does Nietzsche criticize Christianity because it denigrates the human body, but that it also denigrates the meaning and value of the rest of nature, too, despite, as White notes, that some biblical passages celebrate nature as the creation of God.147

For thesis 2, Hallman cites the criticisms of human vanity in the “middle period” writings, the constant portrayals of the human species as the inhabitants of some lone, insignificant planet, the task at *Beyond Good and Evil* 161 “to translate man back into nature,”

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145 Hallman 103-4; D: 425
146 Hallman 105; WP: 845 Hallman, also, in a footnote, notes this emphasis in the work of Peter Singer. See, e.g., Singer, 198.
147 One mostly finds these passages in the Old Testament, particularly the beautiful poetic books of Job, Psalms, and the Song of Songs, and not in the New Testament, overshadowed by passages *ad nauseam* on heaven and hell.
and finally, attributes to Nietzsche a critique of epistemological anthropocentrism, i.e. a view that questions the epistemic priority accorded to human beings, in Nietzsche’s comments on the perspectives of other animals.\textsuperscript{148} The “middle period” writings, indeed, proffer the most evidence that Nietzsche criticizes anthropocentrism in all its forms.\textsuperscript{149} Building on Hallman’s brief suggestions, these writings include the recurrent motif of now viewing the earth from outer space, alone, de-centered, without some overarching teleological scheme governed by divine providence. Hallman contends for a tight connection between what interpreters attribute to Nietzsche as “perspectivism” and epistemological non-anthropocentrism, pointing to the following passage from the \textit{Nachlass}.\textsuperscript{150}

It is obvious that every creature different from us senses different qualities and consequently lives in a different world from that in which we live. Qualities are an idiosyncrasy peculiar to man; to demand that our human interpretations and values should be universal and perhaps constitutive values is one of the hereditary madnesses of human pride.\textsuperscript{151}

Hallman then argues that Nietzsche’s epistemological non-anthropocentrism indicates “that one remain open to the values and perspectives of nonhuman life forms.”\textsuperscript{152} Hallman, then, strongly associates epistemological non-anthropocentrism with axiological non-anthropocentrism. He does this because he implies that incorporating multiple perspectives for Nietzsche entails, also, the incorporation of multiple values, presumably, including the values of non-human organisms.

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\textsuperscript{148} Hallman, 111-12; 116
\textsuperscript{149} See chapter 2 below of my account of Nietzsche’s criticisms of metaphysical anthropocentrism during this period, and chapter 3 for his critique of axiological anthropocentrism and the evidence that Nietzsche also supports ethical non-anthropocentrism.
\textsuperscript{150} Hallman, 116
\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Werke} 16:65-6
\textsuperscript{152} Hallman, 116
\end{flushleft}
Also, if by remaining “open” Hallman means extending moral consideration, he also associates epistemological non-anthropocentrism with ethical non-anthropocentrism, too.

For thesis 3, Hallman draws from isolated fragments of Nietzsche’s later Nachlass which generally characterize the world as a system of forces in which “every displacement of power at any point would affect the whole system” and, secondly, with special reference to der Wille zur Macht, a constant recycling of energy.\textsuperscript{153} His argument for his thesis follows here.

First, there is the passage where Nietzsche defines life itself as a system of interdependent forces that are “connected by a common mode of nutrition.” On a more general level, there is Nietzsche’s argument that the world itself must be viewed as a gigantic system of interacting forces, a system in which “every displacement of power at any point would affect the whole system,” in which “there would be contiguous and concurrent dependence.”

It should be obvious from these passages that Nietzsche is envisaging the world or nature in terms similar to modern ecologists, i.e. in terms of what Colwell calls a “self-recycling energy system.” In other words, Nietzsche is viewing nature as a living, growing, decaying process, a process that functions according to the general principle that “life always lives at the expense of other life.” In another note collected in The Will to Power, the similarity between Nietzsche’s position and that of modern ecologists becomes even clearer. In addition to emphasizing the interdependency of all living things, this note also leaves no doubt that

\textsuperscript{153} Hallman, 121; WP: 638
Nietzsche views the world, i.e. nature, as a system in which energy is recycled again and again.

The world exists; it is not something that becomes, not something that passes away, but it has never begun to become and never ceased from passing away--- it maintains itself in both. --- It lives on itself: its excrements are its food.\textsuperscript{154}

Hallman then goes on to discuss, that for Nietzsche, the notion of \textit{der Wille zur Macht}, reflects these ecological insights from the argument above. The necessary movement of every force exacting its power in discharge at every moment maintains this described ecology of forces in a constant and dynamic state of equilibrium. Though perpetually in a constant war, every center of force depends on other centers of force. Hallman does not distinguish between different competing models by which to understand ecosystems, but the passages he utilizes in interpreting Nietzsche’s discussion of energy, strongly suggest the thermodynamic model. Nietzsche unsentimentally describes the interactions of different forms of living energy as impersonal forces, much more akin to viewing an ecosystem as the product of flows of materials and energy.

Finally, for thesis 4, Hallman calls attention to the “return to nature” passages from \textit{Twilight of the Idols} and \textit{The Will to Power}.\textsuperscript{155} Here he notes the dramatic difference that Nietzsche aims to draw between himself and Romanticism.\textsuperscript{156} Hallman interprets Nietzsche as viewing Romanticism as compromised by the traditional Western conceptions of nature.

\textsuperscript{154} Hallman, 121; WP: 1066
\textsuperscript{155} Hallman, 112-13; TI, “Skirmishes of an Untimely One”, 48; KSA 6 [150]; WP: 72; \textit{Werke} 15: 226
\textsuperscript{156} Hallman, 112-15
Romanticism uncritically advocates for a “return to nature” itself but without a prior critique of the given conception of nature maligned by the tradition. Unfortunately, Hallman does not specify precisely why Romanticism problematically typifies this “anti-natural” background tradition in its content. Hallman returns to a discussion of White and indicates that the phrase “return to nature” marks Nietzsche’s project to combat the tradition itself. Therefore, Hallman implies, that for Nietzsche, the “return to nature” means discarding “otherworldly” views and aspirations and affirming the natural aspects of one’s humanity and through a conception of nature not maligned by the tradition. However, he does not clearly draw the precise difference between the malignancy of the traditional conception of nature and Nietzsche’s own new conception of nature. The article as a whole, however, implies that the ecological notion of *der Wille zur Macht* conceives of nature in precisely such an unmaligned manner, though again, Hallman does not make this connection completely clear.

Because Hallman first published a paper sketching out an interpretation of an environmental Nietzsche he has received by far the most critical attention. Acampora, at times borderline uncharitable, first rightly criticized Hallman for basing his defense of an environmental Nietzsche on isolated fragments and for not providing an overall hermeneutic approach to substantiate his thesis. The isolated quotes that Hallman highlights, without the overall interpretative approach needed to successfully utilize these fragmentary quotes under a unifying interpretative hypothesis, nonetheless, register concerns for the perspectives and values of non-human life forms and the ability to think in large timescales well into the distant past and future. Also, in fairness to Hallman, he explicitly makes chronological distinctions among Nietzsche’s texts in his contention that Nietzsche moved away from an unambiguous

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157 Acampora, 188
anthropocentric conception of the relation of humans to the natural world in his third *Untimely Meditation, Schopenhauer as Educator* in favor for the deep ecological views (i.e. as construed by Hallman) of his later philosophy.\(^\text{158}\) Acampora also charges Hallman for failing to address the issue of *der Übermenschen*, a notion that Acampora finds suggestive of an “anthropocentric elitism.”\(^\text{159}\) Acampora characterizes this elitism as an extreme form of individualism incompatible with an environmental *ethos*. Acampora, recall, emphasizes against Hallman that Nietzsche places great value on exceptional individuals who can *overcome*, rather than preserve, their environment\(^\text{160}\) Regardless of what one might think of Acampora’s interpretation this omission does raise serious suspicions against Hallman’s argument. Finally, Hallman, claims Acampora, ignores serious discussion of Nietzsche’s comments on exploitation, specifically in the context of his explication of *der Wille zur Macht*.\(^\text{161}\) Hallman, however, does not so much ignore this component of *der Wille zur Macht* in his discussion of the notion so much as simply fail to explain how Nietzsche’s emphasis on the plural values of life pursued by organisms *via* exploitation can legitimate non-exploitative moral imperatives. Every biocentric position though faces this task since every form of life evolved because of it being able to exploit something or even everything about its environment, particularly human beings. This is hardly, however, an insurmountable task, and on some level, a task faced by any ethic or morality that grants some kind of form of life moral consideration. Nietzsche’s acknowledgment of exploitation as a fundamental characteristic of all flourishing organisms, then, does not serve up much evidence against the view that Nietzsche ascribes moral considerability to any, or even all, forms of life.

\(^{158}\) Hallman, 110

\(^{159}\) Acampora, 188-9

\(^{160}\) Acampora, 191

\(^{161}\) Acampora, 189
Drenthen criticized Hallman on different grounds. Drenthen, in addition to endorsing the first general hermeneutic criticism above levelled by Acampora, i.e. charging Hallman with basing his defense on isolated fragments, also charges Hallman with ignoring the radical perspectivity characterizing the notion of *der Wille zur Macht*.162 Though Hallman ignores passages suggesting such a character of radical perspectivity he does, however, address the issue of perspectivism itself in connection with his attribution of epistemological non-anthropocentrism to Nietzsche. Hallman, though, does not discuss *der Wille zur Macht* when he alludes to perspectivism, so Drenthen is right to view Hallman’s interpretation as incomplete.

Del Caro, unlike the former critics, endorses Hallman’s main project, i.e. an exoneration of Nietzsche’s philosophy from Heidegger on issues concerning the environment.163 In particular, Del Caro concurs with Hallman’s view that Nietzsche’s “translation” of humanity back into nature goes further than previous attempts in Western philosophy because Nietzsche recognizes the tradition’s denigration of nature.164 He also credits Hallman with calling attention to the ecological view of cosmic energy in the *Nachlass*.165 Nevertheless, Del Caro criticizes Hallman’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s views on the complete interrelatedness of all living things as an egalitarian overstatement that belies Nietzsche’s honest recognition of the “pathos of distance” between every perspective.166 For Nietzsche, Del Caro contends, the separation and order of rank that develops between different forms of life fundamentally characterizes nature in its totality and interconnectedness. For this reason, Del Caro voices his sympathy for criticisms that Acampora levels against Hallman, i.e. that Hallman does not adequately address Nietzsche’s

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162 Drenthen (1999), 169-170; 174
163 Del Caro, 143
164 Del Caro, 80
165 Del Caro, 379
166 Del Caro, 414
affirmation of exploitation, predation, and an “order of rank” among forms of life.\(^{167}\) Parkes, also, agrees with some of the main criticisms levelled against Hallman by Acampora such as his omission of any discussion of *der Übermensch* or his uncritical use of the *Nachlass* but concurs with Hallman’s four main theses.\(^{168}\) In addition, Parkes thinks that Hallman’s interpretation of the ecological emphasis in Nietzsche as exclusively on “the interrelatedness of all living things” fails to capture how Nietzsche moves beyond biocentrism in his ecological outlook.\(^{169}\) I treat of Parkes’s argument that Nietzsche moves beyond biocentrism below in the next section. He also does not think that Hallman clearly explicates what the notion of “return to nature” means for Nietzsche.

Even though he says this return is not “retrogression,” Hallman’s frequent use of the phrase “reimmersion into nature” strongly suggests a regression to a prior absorption rather than the “*going up* to a lofty, free, even terrible nature and naturalness” that Nietzsche explicitly advocates.\(^{170}\)

Parkes’s particular criticism here is somewhat vague, but both he and Del Caro raise fair worries about Hallman’s argument though, as I argue below, Parkes does not make a convincing case that Nietzsche moves “beyond biocentrism.”

Despite the many criticisms against Hallman, his paper made an important contribution to the assessment of Nietzsche’s views on religion and the natural world. Much to Hallman’s credit, he recognizes that Nietzsche anticipates many of the criticisms levelled against the Christian tradition by the historian Lynn White, Jr. on the historical roots of the present

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\(^{167}\) Del Caro, 407, 414

\(^{168}\) Parkes (2005), 80-1, 83

\(^{169}\) Parkes (2005), 84-7

\(^{170}\) Parkes (2005), 81; TI: 9.48; KSA 6: [150]
ecological crisis, i.e. fostering a view that accentuates a radical dichotomy between the natural world and the human species and assigning “disproportionate importance” to the latter.\(^{171}\)

Hallman, though not differentiating between different senses of anthropocentrism, does make a plausible case for distancing Nietzsche from a reading like Heidegger’s. On the other hand, however, his suggestion to view Nietzsche as a deep ecologist weirdly fails to do justice to Nietzsche’s deeply hierarchical tendencies in his ethical discourse.

H. Parkes: Nietzsche's Celebration of the Inorganic

Despite his overly idealistic construal of Nietzsche as a deep ecologist Hallman did not develop the most extreme counter position to Heidegger. Parkes aims to take the sense in which Nietzsche advances a non-anthropomorphic view of reality and a non-anthropocentric view of value beyond the position of Hallman. This puts Parkes on the extreme end of the spectrum away from Heidegger. In fact, his positions count as a complete inversion of the interpretative outlook advanced by Heidegger, i.e. the notion of *der Wille zur Macht* presents a non-anthropomorphic conception of reality and the proclamation of *der Übermensch* a commitment to a non-anthropocentric project in value theory. Parkes makes this position clear in his criticisms of Acampora and Drenthen, specifically regarding *der Wille zur Macht*.\(^{172}\) Acampora, recall, according to Parkes, underdetermines Nietzsche’s conception of *der Wille zur Macht* by exclusively focusing on the exploitation by which Nietzsche characterizes living forces. Also, in his interpretation of *der Übermensch* as an anthropocentric elitist notion, Acampora fails to hear Nietzsche’s refrain from Zarathustra “that the human being is something that must be

\(^{171}\) Hallman, 101-6

\(^{172}\) Parkes (2005), 81-2, 85, 87-90
overcome.” Furthermore, Parkes explains why previous interpretations of Nietzsche failed to appreciate the environmental concerns in Nietzsche’s philosophy by pointing out one of the weaker criticisms that Acampora levels against Hallman.

In preparing to criticize Max Hallman for portraying Nietzsche as a proto-deep ecologist, Acampora warns against ‘rushing to the conclusion that Hallman has seen an entirely new side of Nietzschean texts, a side that has eluded several generations of the most acute critical eyes.’ But the ecological dimension to Nietzsche’s work has always been there: it has just been ignored, for two reasons. First, the context of the man’s life has been neglected--- a distinct disadvantage in the case of such an avowedly personal thinker as Nietzsche. Second, there has been a failure to appreciate the extent to which his philosophy constitutes a radical departure from its antecedents in the Western tradition. Thus, on the topic of nature especially, there is much to be gained from approaching Nietzsche’s ideas from a comparative, non-Western perspective. When seen in the light of Daoist and Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, for instance, his thinking about nature reveals facets that have escaped the notice of commentaries based solely in the Western traditions.174

Both Acampora and Hallman also fail to appreciate the interpretative dimension of der Wille zur Macht, as Drenthen rightly points out.175 However, Parkes contests that this commits Nietzsche to the view that human beings may only ever come to know merely interpretations of nature and

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174 Parkes (2005), 77-8
175 Parkes (2005), 85
never nature as it is in itself. Parkes, remember, disagrees with Drenthen primarily for the following three reasons. According to Parkes, Drenthen fails to take seriously Nietzsche’s task formulated as follows: “the dehumanizing of nature and then the naturalizing of the human, after it has attained the pure concept of ‘nature.’” Drenthen also does not take account of Nietzsche’s endorsement of the view that objectivity regarding reality increases by virtue of the multiplicity of perspectives employed, i.e. entertaining as many perspectives as possible. Finally, Drenthen misses the similarity to Daoist and Buddhist contemplative methodologies, i.e. “emptying the heart-mind” and “reducing attachments”, respectively, where Nietzsche claims that “one can also practice reducing the force of the drives by reverting to the ‘dead’ {i.e. inorganic} world”, i.e. by unlearning some drives so as to “employ the entire abundance of one’s powers in looking.” Parkes, then, collectively faults his predecessors for failing to miss the profound depth of Nietzsche’s view of the natural world.

Two novel and distinctive emphases from Parkes’ interpretation stand out from above: his stress on appreciating the context of Nietzsche’s own lived experience of the natural world and his interpretation of Nietzsche as moving beyond biocentrism in a celebration of the inorganic, both comparable to Daoist and Zen Buddhist experiences of nature. Parkes appeals to Nietzsche’s own standard of honesty and authenticity as a justification for examining and utilizing biographical information about Nietzsche as an insight into his philosophy. He specifically calls attention to Nietzsche’s auto-biographical descriptions of his relation to the natural world, his intense readings of figures such as Goethe, Hölderlin, and Emerson; and his own poetry and travels, particularly the time he devoted to hiking despite his frequent health

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176 Parkes (2005), 87-90
177 Parkes (2005), 87; KSA 9:11[211]
178 Parkes (2005), 88; KSA 9:11[35]
179 Parkes (2005), 78-80
problems. Nietzsche, also, despite his critique of ascetic values lived a life somewhat similar to a Thoreau, or a Daoist or Buddhist monk, especially after retiring early with a modest pension. From early childhood up to his last lonely wanderings Nietzsche developed a singular attraction to trees and rocks. His affinity for the latter, and his recognition of the plurality of perspectives alive in nature, led him to push this contemplation on perspectivity one step further, rather oddly, and consider the “perspectives” of the inorganic. As Parkes points out, for Nietzsche, the forces of the inorganic exert an interpretative force just as living beings do about what it means to exist.

Nietzsche suggests that we understand the so-called inorganic realm as “a more primitive form of the world of affects” and “a kind of drive-life in which all organic functions, with self-regulation, assimilation, nourishment, excretion, metabolism, are synthetically bound up with each other --- as a preform of life.” He means that the drives interpret at different levels of complexity. Rock, for instance, works at a fairly basic level of interpretation, as if to say, “This, here, is what it means to exist.” As the “powerful unity” of the “material world” branches out and develops in the organic process,” the interpretation becomes more complex: in assimilating earth and water for sunlight, the plant offers a richer interpretation: “This is what it means to exist.”

Parkes also calls attention to how Nietzsche displaces the opposition of non-living and living by simply viewing the living as a rather more complex elaboration of the non-living, where the non-living constitutes the fundamental part of the false duality. For Nietzsche, then, death amounts to
a return to this “mother’s womb,” similar to religious expressions in both Daoist and Māhāyana Buddhist traditions.

Parkes, also, gives decisive textual evidence and interpretative support for the following three aspects of Nietzsche’s philosophy:

1. Understanding reality as *der Wille zur Macht* involves some kind of attempt to think of reality in a non-anthropomorphic manner.

2. The proclamation of *der Übermensch* involves moving beyond an anthropocentric perspective on values.

3. The move noted in 2 also involves appreciating the inorganic realm.

For claim 1, Parkes argues that when Nietzsche extrapolates from the given inner experience of drives and affects to hypothesize about the entire world, including the inorganic, he doesn’t fall into an anthropomorphic view (he misleadingly uses the term “anthropocentrism”) because of already deconstructing the human subject itself.

This is by no means an instance of anthropocentrism, since Nietzsche has just desubstantialized the “soul” into a configuration of forces (“a social structure of the drives and affects”), shown the human “I” to be a fiction generated by the grammatical habit of positing a doer behind every doing, and demonstrated “will” to be a complex function of forces issuing from a social structure of multiple “souls” deep within the body. Far from being the “will power” exerted by a
human ego, the will of will to power is (as in Schopenhauer’s conception of will) a cosmic force.¹⁸²

Recall that Heidegger contentiously anticipates this interpretative line by stressing that Nietzsche, like Descartes, methodologically begins from human subjectivity, even though he decenters the human subject, “I”, into the unconscious processes of the body. However, as Parkes highlights in the quote above, Heidegger ignores the manner in which Nietzsche describes and interprets bodily processes, i.e. as impersonal forces consistent with his aim to translate human beings back into nature, and this after de-humanizing nature itself. Parkes, however, mistakenly refers to the attempt to understand reality as *der Wille zur Macht*, and so in a non-anthropomorphic manner, as Nietzsche’s attempt to come to know “nature as it is in-itself.” Nietzsche, however, rejects the idea that coming to know “nature as it is in-itself” is either possible or meaningful as Drenthen, for instance, argues for in his article.¹⁸³ However, in between Nietzsche’s stress on the plasticity of interpretations and his rejection of any metaphysical views regarding the *Ding an sich*, and his avowed naturalism and endorsement of the epistemic superiority of increasing the number of perspectives employed, lies some conceptual and logical space for a unique kind of ontology, i.e. one concerned simply with

¹⁸² Parkes (2005), 84
¹⁸³ Drenthen (1999), 169-170. It is standardly assumed that Nietzsche held the opposite view in *The Birth of Tragedy* in which he is thought to uncritically endorse Schopenhauer’s metaphysics despite his critical posture towards Schopenhauer’s aesthetics. See, e.g. Young (2001). This assumption about his early work has been rightly contested. See Haar (1996). Poellner (1998) and Han-Pile (2006) do not go as far as Haar, who claims that Nietzsche fully rejects metaphysics and the thing-in-itself/appearance distinction before 1872, but all three argue that Nietzsche articulates a very distinctive metaphysical conception from Schopenhauer’s in BT. The most decisive piece of evidence in favor of Haar’s view is an unpublished, fragmentary essay on Schopenhauer written in the late 1860s. See *Werke. Historisch-Kritische Gesammtausgabe*, eds. H. J. Mette and K. Schlechta. Munich: Anhang, 1933ff, III, 352–361. See also a translation in *The Nietzsche Reader* (Ansell-Pearson/Large 2006). Regardless, certainly by the time of *Human* in 1876, and no doubt sooner than its publication, and so for the majority of his career, Nietzsche took a decisive critical posture towards any sort of metaphysical conception of the *Ding-an-sich.*
“nature as it is.”\textsuperscript{184} This conception rejects the Kantian and Schopenhauerian possibility of the \textit{Ding an sich} and so the possibility of a metaphysical world beyond cognition. “Nature as it is” simply refers to nature as it is experienced and cognized as, for example, in the natural sciences in so far as they stick as close as possible to the empirical phenomena without needlessly positing metaphysical entities. Certainly, at the very least, Nietzsche appears to be operating with a distinction like this for nearly the entirety of his career.

For claim 2 regarding \textit{der Übermensch}, Parkes argues that Zarathustra’s imagery and message involves transcending and “overcoming” an anthropocentric perspective. Parkes appeals to the strong imperatival language concerning the earth in the Prologue.

The injunction to “stay true to the earth,” which Hallman rightly suggests comes close to being a “moral imperative,” is complemented by a warning against “sacrilege against the earth,” for the locus of the Divine is now fully this-worldly rather than in some transcendent heaven.\textsuperscript{185}

Parkes also emphasizes that Zarathustra’s most enlightening moments on his spiritual journey take place in solitude against the backdrop of the natural world. He particularly highlights his pedagogical development. Parkes, then, points primarily to context to support his view of \textit{der Übermensch}. This argumentative strategy though comports with arguing that Christianity, too, which Nietzsche faults as “anti-natural”, exemplifies an overcoming of an anthropocentric perspective, because Jesus, for example, goes into the wilderness as a part of his own spiritual journey.\textsuperscript{186} Nonetheless, interpreters cannot ignore that Zarathustra uses the imperatival

\textsuperscript{184} I explore this issue in my (unpublished) paper “Nietzsche’s Abolition of the Appearance/Reality Distinction and the Overturning of Platonism in Twilight of the Idols”, 17-22.

\textsuperscript{185} Parkes (2005), 82; see also Parkes (1997), secs. 2 and 3.

\textsuperscript{186} Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 5:16
language concerning the earth as directly linked with *der Übermensch*. Parkes, then, like Del Caro, rightly captures the significance of the meaning and value of the earth right at the core of Zarathustra’s proclamations. Parkes, however, fails to explicate the meaning and relevance of Nietzsche’s perfectionism, if not outright elitism, with regard to his non-anthropocentrism, simply inverting the problem with Acampora’s interpretation, who glosses over the non-anthropocentric aspects of Nietzsche’s writings in an exclusive focus on an “order of rank”, conceived only in terms of exploitation. Parkes, as in Hallman’s interpretation, does not do justice to the hierarchial tendencies found throughout Nietzsche’s writings. He does not adequately address texts concerned with an “order of rank.” He does not address Nietzsche’s conception of higher culture, or his promotion of exceptional exemplars, or his critique of egalitarianism. These aspects of Nietzsche’s view certainly do not rule out that Nietzsche embraces some form of non-anthropocentrism. However, an interpretation that remains silent on these themes fails to make a convincing interpretative case.

Finally, the third aspect raises potential philosophical and interpretative difficulties. Even if one grants that Nietzsche avoids anthropomorphism in his attribution of perspectives to the inorganic world (because he views perspectives as the expressions of impersonal sub-human or even in most cases, non-human forces), Parkes does not fully explain this attribution.\(^\text{187}\) Does this entail that things can go better or worse for inorganic beings like rocks? The attribution of perspectives, as conceived by Nietzsche, to the inorganic world seems to entail this very odd and implausible conclusion. Does Nietzsche always consistently view the inorganic as related to life?

\(^{187}\) Haar, quoting from a French edition of the Nietzsche’s notes and fragments, discusses a few passages in the *Nachlass* where Nietzsche speaks this way (Haar, 116). Parkes, however, does not provide sufficient textual support for this interpretation. Nietzsche certainly permitted himself wildly divergent and uncommon speculations, particularly in his notebooks. This hardly provides a firm footing by which to build an interpretation of his overall position.
this way, or does he ever accord a special privilege or status to life itself? I take up this question primarily in chapter 3. However, as we have seen, for example, in the section above on Storey, regardless of how Nietzsche views the extent of the perspectival, he strongly suggests that valuation only emerges with the appearance of life. What does an ethic that moves beyond biocentrism—which would purportedly recognize all valuations as morally considerable—involve practically, anyway? Parkes does not address this question at all and it is hard to see how such a position could inform practical action. Though Parkes does not adequately address these questions he does advance a solid argument that Nietzsche, as consistent with his own life experiences, radically values the natural world in such a way as to be in a constant state of receptiveness to its interpretative forces.

III. Conclusion and a Sketch of Chapters 2 and 3

Overall, previous work on Nietzsche’s relationship to environmental philosophy does not adequately distinguish between various kinds of anthropocentrism and how these relate to the problem of anthropomorphism. Therefore, my account that follows aims to accentuate these distinctions as they apply to Nietzsche’s writings on nature and the environment. The literature, however, certainly, both explicitly and implicitly, raises some clear and meaningful interpretative tasks.

1. Are Nietzsche’s own views on nature compatible with his well-documented critique of anthropomorphism? Does Nietzsche criticize different kinds of anthropomorphism?

2. To what extent does Nietzsche critique epistemological anthropocentrism?
3. Are Nietzsche’s own views on nature compatible with his well-documented critique of metaphysical anthropocentrism?

4. Are Nietzsche’s own views of value and morality compatible with his well-documented critique of axiological anthropocentrism? Does Nietzsche, to whatever extent he recognizes the notion given his critique of morality, extend moral considerability beyond the human species and into the distant future?

5. Does Nietzsche simply view power itself as a criterion of value? Would this matter for assessing him concerning axiological anthropocentrism given his views on the pervasiveness of many different forms of power in nature?

6. Should Nietzsche best be understood as endorsing a) long-term anthropocentrism b) eco-natural holism c) some other form of biocentrism, or d) some radical nature ethic “beyond biocentrism”?

7. How should one understand the notion of der Übermensch?

8. Does Nietzsche’s view of amor fati pose a particular problem for viewing Nietzsche as an environmental thinker?

These interpretative questions center around Nietzsche’s views on nature and reality on the one hand in questions 1-3, and his views on value and morality regarding nature on the other, in questions 4-8.

In chapter 2, then, I explore Nietzsche’s views on nature and reality attending to questions 1-3 above. First, I give a brief chronological overview of Nietzsche’s evolving conception of nature and reality demarcated by the traditional divisions of his early, middle, and
later philosophy. Next, I focus on one of Nietzsche’s central “tasks”, i.e. the de-humanization of nature and then the renaturalization of the human after obtaining a “pure” concept of nature. I argue that this supplies the appropriate overall context by which to understand the infamous notion of *der Wille zur Macht*. Finally, I assess this notion as a hypothetical interpretation of empirical reality and evaluate it with regard to a subjectivist methodological starting point, anthropomorphism, epistemological and metaphysical anthropocentrism, and whether or not it provides a model by which to understand an ecosystem.

In chapter 3, I explore Nietzsche’s views on value and morality attending to questions 4-8 above. First, I give an account of Nietzsche’s early axiological and ethical comments on nature which culminates in his articulation of a virtue-theoretic environmental ethic in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Next, I give an account of Nietzsche’s constructivist long-term consequentialism inaugurated in *Human, All Too Human*, which I argue is qualified by axiological and ethical non-anthropocentrism, and his critique of morality during the “middle period.” Finally, I assess whether or not Nietzsche retains or modifies his long-term view as qualified by axiological and ethical non-anthropocentrism in the “later period.” In particular, there I assess the infamous notions of *der Übermensch* and *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, respectively.
Chapter 2: Nietzsche’s Views on Nature and Reality

I. The Issues

First, Nietzsche began to concern himself with the problem of anthropomorphism (he does not distinguish between conceptual and metaphorical anthropomorphism) very early during the course of his thought. Recall that metaphorical anthropomorphism refers to the tendency to attribute human thoughts, feelings, and capacities to non-human beings (e.g. The wily and sinister coyote smiled wickedly as he crafted a perfect scheme by which to abduct the fawn) whereas conceptual anthropomorphism refers to the tendency to attribute human concepts, or mental structures and constructs, to non-human natural phenomena (e.g. The universe just is a big mathematical equation). This distinction is important because the term “anthropomorphism”, in its contemporary usage, particularly in the context of animal cognition, really refers to what I designate as metaphorical anthropomorphism. This, however, would not always capture the sense in which Nietzsche, or Heidegger, criticize a metaphysical position. It might also help explain why Nietzsche may seem to waver on whether or not cognition can escape the problem of anthropomorphism. Nietzsche confidently dismisses metaphorical anthropomorphic conceptions as needless metaphysical errors whereas the problem of escaping what I designate as a conceptual anthropomorphism he finds more difficult to avoid because of the all too human tendency to simplify and explain the complex quickly with the aid of any available concept. Most of his notes on the problem don’t reveal any specific position or concise analysis, but they do indicate that Nietzsche wavered from viewing it as an inevitable part of human cognition to simply critiquing...
much of previous philosophy for perpetuating the error. Nietzsche would, however, go on to make his criticisms explicit during the middle period. However, when Nietzsche ventured his own hypothetical interpretation of empirical reality during his later period, he designated his notion der Wille zur Macht. This phrase, unmediated contextually, conjures up images of non-human beings acting like humans by actively willing certain actions in the world for the sake of their own power. This tends to happen because readers often can’t shake an association of consciousness and intentionality with the activity of willing. Nietzsche, however, makes it clear that he does not view willing as a conscious activity. The phrase der Wille zur Macht, nonetheless, does not unambiguously suggest a non-anthropomorphic notion. Given the multiple criticisms of anthropomorphism in different contexts (e.g. GS 109), and his own designation for his view of reality, Nietzsche leaves his reader with questions about the relationship between these criticisms and the development of his own conception of nature as a dynamic interaction of forces conceived as der Wille zur Macht.

Second, recall that Hallman attributes to Nietzsche epistemological non-anthropocentrism. Hallman views this thesis as a natural extension of Nietzsche’s perspectivism. Not only does Nietzsche recognize the plurality of particular conditions at work in human perception and cognition, but Nietzsche extends this recognition beyond the human world. If a more objective understanding of the world requires working through as many human perspectives as possible because of this recognized plurality, then this suggests that an even more objective understanding incorporates non-human perspectives, too, to whatever extent possible. Human beings take for granted that no other animals possess quite as good cognitive equipment as themselves. Nietzsche,

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189 HAH I: 10, 19; II: 5, 9, 26; WS: 11, 14, 67; D: 23; GS: 109, 127, 246
190 BGE: 19
at the very least, challenges this assumption when he questions to what extent consciousness really works better for human flourishing than unconscious instincts.\textsuperscript{191} Certainly, the endorsement of epistemological non-anthropocentrism warrants serious philosophical consideration independent of to what extent Nietzsche endorses the view. Think of the heightened sensory qualities of many animal species. Would conceptions of the natural world built upon such differences in sensory quality yield the same types of conception? Hallman, also recall, rightly points to the possible connection between epistemological non-anthropocentrism and other forms of non-anthropocentrism as given in axiology and ethics. Settling the question, then, on to what extent Nietzsche criticizes epistemological anthropocentrism and embraces the opposite thesis, may shed light on to what extent Nietzsche does the same with regard to the question of values and moral considerability.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, quite clearly criticizes the distinct error of metaphysical anthropocentrism, as in the following passage.

Our uniqueness in the universe! alas, it is all too improbable an idea! The astronomers, to whom there is sometimes given a horizon that really is free of earth, give us to understand that the drop of life in the universe is without significance for the total character of the tremendous ocean of becoming and passing away: that uncounted stars possess similar conditions for the production of life as the earth does--- very many thus do, though they constitute only a handful compared with the limitless number which have never experienced the eruption of life or long since have recovered from it; that measured against the duration of their existence life on each of these stars has been a moment, a sudden flickering up, with long, long

\textsuperscript{191} GS: 11; TI: “The Problem of Socrates”; AC: 14
spaces of time afterwards--- and thus in no sense the goal and ultimate objective of their existence. Perhaps the ant in the forest imagines it is the goal and objective of the forest just as we do when in our imagination we almost involuntarily associate the destruction of mankind with the destruction of the earth: indeed, we are being modest if we halt at that and do not organize a general twilight of the gods and the universe for the funeral rites of the last man. Even the most unprejudiced astronomer himself can hardly imagine the earth without life other than as the luminous and floating grave-mound of mankind.

However, recall, that Acampora claims that Nietzsche’s discourse is homo-exclusive, i.e. Nietzsche primarily focuses on human nature. Heidegger, too, thought that the conception of *der Wille zur Macht*, constructed from a subjectivist foundation, insidiously reinforces an emphasis on the uniqueness and special significance of human beings over and above other beings. Does, then, the seemingly homo-exclusive discourse, particularly in the later writings, and a conception of reality ostensibly constructed from the observation of human behavior, slip back and foster a retreat back into metaphysical anthropocentrism?

This chapter tackles the questions raised above, first, by giving a brief chronological overview of significant developments in Nietzsche’s conception of reality. Second, I focus on what Nietzsche describes as his “task.” This provides an important contextual background by which to understand *der Wille zur Macht*. The account then of Nietzsche’s “task” and *der Wille zur Macht* develops a response to the questions above. I conclude this chapter, then, with that response.

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192 WS: 14
II. A Brief Summary of the Major Components in the Chronological Development of Nietzsche’s Views on Nature and Reality

A. Early Philosophy

*The Birth of Tragedy* is often taken to be simply a work of aesthetics that assumes a Schopenhauerian metaphysical framework. However, some commentators contest this interpretation, particularly because Nietzsche levels fundamental criticisms against Schopenhauer’s metaphysics in the early *Nachlass*. In fact, Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer’s conception of the will in such a way that anticipates his critique of the notion as an anthropomorphism in the middle period. First, notice the following criticisms from the early *Nachlass* even before the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

However, we can see from Sch.’s entire system, and in particular from the first account of it in Vol. I of *W as W*, that he permits himself the human and by no means transcendent use of unity in the will wherever it suits him, and basically has recourse to that transcend[ence] only where the gaps in the system strike him as too palpable.

The totality of drives, the play of feelings, sensations, affects, acts of will--- as I must here contrary to Schopenhauer--- are, on closest self-inspection, known to us only as representations, not in their essence; and we may say that even

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194 See e.g., Haar (1996), Poellner (1998), and Han-Pile (2006).
195 “On Schopenhauer”: 3
Schopenhauer’s “will” is nothing but the most universal manifestation [Erscheinungsform] of something, for us, totally indecipherable.\textsuperscript{196} Nietzsche evinces concerns over the supposed noumenal transcendence of Schopenhauer’s conception of the will and that he arrives at this notion by projecting merely internal human experience out upon the totality of the world. Nietzsche, however, does not fully expand upon these criticisms and does seem to defer to Schopenhauer in his early published writings. At the very least, during this stage, Nietzsche gives evidence of a critical attitude towards Schopenhauer’s metaphysics and, in part, because of the problem of anthropomorphism.

B. Middle Philosophy

During the middle period writings--- \textit{Human, All Too Human}, \textit{Daybreak}, and the first edition of \textit{The Gay Science}--- Nietzsche gives every indication that he takes as given the current body of scientific knowledge.\textsuperscript{197} Nietzsche, however, does not accept this knowledge uncritically. He often indicates that current science does not give the best philosophical interpretations of its own results. Nietzsche, then, during this period aims to give a philosophical interpretation of reality that builds off of this knowledge.

Nietzsche contrasts this interpretative approach with metaphysics, and indeed, Nietzsche inaugurates his critique of metaphysics at the very start of \textit{Human, All Too Human}. Nietzsche, in particular, levels foundational criticisms against the metaphysics of Schopenhauer and

\textsuperscript{196} KSA 12[1]

\textsuperscript{197} See e.g., the following representative passages: HAH I: 25, 38, 245, 251, 281; WS: 14; D: 3-11, 453; GS: 109
Christianity. Nietzsche notes wide-ranging problems with traditional metaphysics, but this account focuses in particular on his critique of metaphysical anthropocentrism and the refinement of his critique of anthropomorphism.

Beginning with the latter, Nietzsche views anthropomorphism as a natural tendency of human cognition.\(^{198}\) He sees metaphorical anthropomorphism at the root of most superstitious practices and beliefs as given in primitive ascriptions of human-like qualities to natural phenomena.\(^{199}\) In fact, the tendency to conceive things as constructed with personality Nietzsche views as a pervasive and common habit against which a thinker must struggle.\(^{200}\) He also seems to suggest that conceptual anthropomorphism is a product of human beings’ evolution of cognition.\(^{201}\) Nonetheless, he views all forms of anthropomorphism as an epistemic and metaphysical error. He criticizes then contemporary examples of the mistake, claiming that Schopenhauer’s conception of the “will”\(^{202}\) and current scientific talk of “laws of nature”\(^{203}\) both smuggle in metaphorical anthropomorphisms and project them onto reality. Nietzsche, then, assigns himself the task of delivering a philosophical interpretation of nature and reality free of all forms of this mistake.\(^{204}\)

As the quote from *WS* 14 in the introduction to this chapter makes clear, Nietzsche thinks that the scientific revolution, particularly advances in astronomy, renders metaphysical anthropocentrism an obsolete relic of humanity’s metaphysical past. He also gives strong indications that he thinks of it as linked with belief in an over-arching transcendent teleology as

\(^{198}\) Nietzsche, both implicitly and explicitly, touches on the problem in the following passages: HAH I: 10, 19; II: 5, 9, 26; WS: 11, 14, 67; D: 23; GS: 109, 127, 246.

\(^{199}\) D: 23; GS: 127

\(^{200}\) HAH II: 26

\(^{201}\) HAH I: 10, 19; GS: 127

\(^{202}\) HAH II: 5; GS: 127

\(^{203}\) HAH II: 9

\(^{204}\) GS: 109
governed by divine providence.\textsuperscript{205} In fact, this nexus of beliefs historically hindered the advancement and development of the natural sciences.\textsuperscript{206} Since he thinks that current scientific knowledge renders metaphysical anthropocentrism untenable, he also assigns himself the task to interpret nature free of this error.\textsuperscript{207}

Nietzsche, also, during this time, seems to exemplify critical distance from epistemological anthropocentrism by demonstrating that he takes into consideration the perspectives and cognitions of animals, both imaginatively and speculatively as the following two passages, for example, indicate.\textsuperscript{208}

We see how certain species, for example, monkeys, have a prophetic insight about the weather (as one can observe in Europe --- and not only in zoos, but also on Gibraltar).\textsuperscript{209}

In the meantime I have come to look with new eyes on the secret and solitary fluttering of a butterfly high on the rocky seacoast where many fine plants are growing: it flies about unconcerned that it has but one day more to live and that the night will be too cold for its winged fragility. For it too a philosophy could no doubt be found: though it would no doubt not be mine.\textsuperscript{210}

\textsuperscript{205} D: 37
\textsuperscript{206} D: 547
\textsuperscript{207} GS: 109
\textsuperscript{208} See also, e.g. D:333, 483; GS: 57, 249
\textsuperscript{209} GS: 316
\textsuperscript{210} D: 553
C. Later Philosophy

During the later philosophy Nietzsche develops his “perspectivist” epistemology, and also develops his philosophical interpretation of nature as *der Wille zur Macht*. Since I devote an entire section to *der Wille zur Macht* below--- and evaluate the notion with respect to the issues of metaphysical anthropocentrism and forms of anthropomorphism--- here I will offer up a few comments on Nietzsche’s “perspectivist” epistemology.

Nietzsche appears to import lessons from his “middle philosophy” right into the “later philosophy.” He views most philosophy up to the present as an elaboration of an “all-too-human” perspective.211 Though he advances skepticism about the ability to access any non-human perspective he argues against privileging human cognition as the only possible interpretation of existence.212 Finally, Nietzsche indicates that philosophical objectivity consists of including as many perspectives as possible.213 Since Nietzsche acknowledges the possibility of non-human perspectives, and tightly associates perspectives with his philosophical biological account of drives, Nietzsche exhibits resources necessary for an epistemological non-anthropocentrism. At the very least, Nietzsche clearly adopts a critical posture towards epistemological anthropocentrism, viewing it as a similar piece of philosophical naivety as metaphysical anthropocentrism. In conjunction, he views inclusion of as many perspectives as possible as an epistemic standard while also acknowledging the possibility of non-human perspectives. So, despite his concession to the skeptical worry over how a human might come to access a non-human

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211 BGE: Preface; GS: 374 Note that *The Gay Science* bridges both the “middle” and “later” philosophy since Nietzsche published Book V of the text in 1887.
212 GS: 374
213 GM III: 12
perspective, he implies both the possibility and the epistemic superiority of epistemological non-
anthropocentrism.

The rest of this chapter then focuses on understanding Nietzsche’s culminated philosophy of nature in the “later” period as continuous with the philosophical “task” Nietzsche sets himself during the “middle” period and appears still to accept after the publication of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

III. Nietzsche’s “Task”

Recall that Parkes criticized Drenthen’s view that Nietzsche thinks that human beings can never know nature as it is in itself, but merely interpretations of nature. Parkes, among other criticisms, cites the following significant Nachlass passage to support his argument.

My task: the dehumanizing of nature and then the naturalization of the human, after it has obtained the pure concept of “nature.”

Taken by itself, the citation of this unpublished passage does not suffice to refute Drenthen’s view. However, when connected to relevant published passages spanning Nietzsche’s middle and later period, this fragment does support Parkes’ criticism of Drenthen. The fragment, written down sometime between the spring and autumn of 1881, and so right in the middle of his “middle” period, delineates two parts of the task. The first phrase suggests that Nietzsche calls for a view of nature independent of humanity in some way. Perhaps Nietzsche calls for a view of nature not centered on humanity, or perhaps not compromised by human cognition, or perhaps not viewed

\[^{214} \text{KSA 1881 11 [211]}\]
under the rubric of human values, or perhaps he takes the phrase to mark a general designation of a view of nature that includes each of these components. The second part of the task suggests a call for a naturalistic view of human beings, but only after the completion of the first part of the task. Parkes does not sufficiently analyze this passage, but quotes and comments on a published passage, *BGE* 230, which echoes the second part of the task in the fragment above. In fact, another published passage, *GS* 109, almost uses the identical phrase from the first part of the task. In fact, taken together, both published passages shed light on what Nietzsche takes his task to involve.

The earlier passage, *GS* 109, culls many insights from the then current body of scientific knowledge concerning the universe to set the tone for a new philosophical understanding of nature. The passage, from beginning to end, gives a variety of warnings concerning how human beings tend to want to see the natural world. The passage warrants quoting in its entirety.

*Let us beware.* --- Let us beware of thinking that the world is a living being. Where would it stretch? What would it feed on? How could it grow and procreate? After all, we know roughly what the organic is; are we then supposed to reinterpret what is inexpressibly derivative, late, rare, accidental, which we perceive only on the crust of the earth, as something essential, common, and eternal, as those people do who call the universe an organism? This nauseates me. Let us beware even of believing the universe is a machine; it is certainly not constructed to one end, and the word ‘machine’ pays it far too high an honour. Let us beware of assuming in general and everywhere anything as elegant as the cyclical movements of our neighbouring stars; even a glance at the Milky Way raises doubts whether there are

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215 Parkes (2005), 90
not much coarser and more contradictory movements there, as well as stars with eternally linear paths, etc. The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the considerable duration that is conditioned by it have again made possible the exception of exceptions: the development of the organic. The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called. Judged from the vantage point of our reason, the unsuccessful attempts are by far the rule; the exceptions are not the secret aim, and the whole musical mechanism repeats eternally its tune, which must never be called a melody --- and ultimately even the phrase ‘unsuccessful attempt’ is already an anthropomorphism bearing a reproach. But how could we reproach or praise the universe! Let us beware of attributing to it heartlessness or unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect, nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it want to become any of these things; in no way does it strive to imitate man! In no way do our aesthetic and moral judgments apply to it! It also has no drive to self-preservation or any other drives; nor does it observe any laws. Let us beware of saying there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is no one who commands, no one who obeys, no one who transgresses. Once you know there are no purposes, you also know there is no accident; for only against a world of purposes does the word ‘accident’ have a meaning. Let us beware of saying that death is opposed to life. The living is only a form of what is dead, and a very rare form. Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things. There are no eternally enduring substances; matter is as much of an error
as the god of the Eleatics. But when will we be done with our caution and care? When will all these shadows of god no longer darken us? When will we have completely de-deified nature? When may we begin to naturalize humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?216

This passage effectively combines both the critical stance towards forms of anthropomorphism and metaphysical anthropocentrism. Here, Nietzsche refers to the first part of the task not as “dehumanizing nature” but as aiming for a “de-deified nature.” For Nietzsche, however, “God” merely designates a human projection, masking a metaphysical anthropocentric worldview. Nietzsche then ends the passage by referring to the second part of the task. The passage, however, gives an account of what Nietzsche means concerning the first part of the task and not the second part.

First, Nietzsche warns against interpreting the universe as alive. Nietzsche suggests that he views this as a backsliding towards metaphysical anthropocentrism. After all, not only is life an exception in the universe, human beings are an exception among what is alive. Nietzsche even makes it clear in this passage that he rejects any firm metaphysical opposition between life and death, or, between the organic, “the exception of exceptions,” and the inorganic. Nietzsche highlights the rare exceptionality of life in the universe and rejects any teleological interpretation of the universe in which it might be viewed as aiming for this exception. Not only that, but the opening warning against conceiving the universe as an organism is comparable to charging this potential conception with metaphorical anthropomorphism. Nietzsche, then, makes it clear that he

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216 GS: 109
calls for an interpretation of nature that avoids the mistake of poetically interpreting all natural forces as alive.

Nietzsche also warns against viewing the universe as a machine because the universe does not contain one single end or aim, like a machine, in which each part plays a function for one overall mechanical goal. This prompts a further warning against viewing the universe as characterized by order, particularly in an aesthetics of order. Nietzsche singles out order in particular among what he designates as “aesthetic anthropomorphisms.” His list exemplifies both metaphorical and conceptual anthropomorphisms. Whereas “order” and “form” signify primarily a conceptual anthropomorphism, “wisdom” on the other hand, clearly refers to a human characteristic projected onto the world and so perfectly typifies a metaphorical anthropomorphism. “Beauty” could refer to either a conceptual or metaphorical anthropomorphism, depending on the context of the ascription. Nietzsche accentuates his criticism of attributing order to the universe by rejecting the comparison of the universe to a melody. Nietzsche, then, indicates that he has in mind a designed sense of order or an order conceived as a carefully constructed aesthetic arrangement. Nietzsche, then, also adds another stipulation for an intellectually honest interpretation of nature, i.e. a clear avoidance of any kind of anthropomorphism.

Nietzsche unequivocally rejects any teleological interpretation of the world. Closely connected, Nietzsche also claims that aesthetic or moral judgments, the products of human cognition and society, do not apply to the universe. Nietzsche thinks even the phrase “laws of nature” betrays a tendency to interpret nature with humanly constructed aesthetic or moral categories. Nietzsche does not reject the presence of necessities or even clearly challenge the presence of regularities in the universe, but he does warn against the loaded connotations of construing the universe as somehow obeying laws. Nietzsche even thinks the phrase “unsuccessful
attempt” masks a latent negative evaluation of the universe, as if the universe mostly fails to produce something of exceptional quality. Not only then does Nietzsche call for a conception of nature stripped of metaphysical anthropocentrism and forms of anthropomorphism, but also an interpretation that does not smuggle in human estimations of value. This indirectly implies a concern to also avoid axiological anthropocentrism as part of the task to remove the residue of god from a conception of the world, or as Nietzsche puts it in the earlier fragment, “dehumanize nature.”

This passage then shows that Nietzsche sets as his task to philosophically interpret nature free of anthropomorphisms, metaphysical anthropocentrism, categories of human evaluation, and as consistent as possible with the then current body of scientific knowledge, though not uncritically accepting the then current standard interpretation of that knowledge.

Next, the later passage, *BGE* 230, delineates what Nietzsche calls for in the second part of the task. Nietzsche begins the passage by highlighting how the human spirit attempts to “digest” the world in a way suitable to its own flourishing explicitly comparing it to a stomach. Nietzsche then transitions to a defense of intellectual honesty despite its cruelty (and even its extension of the digestive tendency of the spirit, i.e. that it also satisfies certain drives) which culminates in the exposition of the second part of the task. These aspects of the passage are quoted here.

This {i.e. the tendency of the human spirit to digest the world for its own flourishing} will to appearances, to simplification, to mask, to cloaks, in short, to surfaces --- since every surface is a cloak --- meets resistance from that sublime tendency of the knower, who treats and wants to treat things in a profound, multiple, thorough manner. This is a type of cruelty on the part of the intellectual conscience and taste, and one that any brave thinker will acknowledge in himself, assuming he
has spent as long as he should in hardening and sharpening his eye for himself, and that he is used to strict discipline as well as strict words. He will say “There is something cruel in the tendency of my spirit”: --- just let kind and virtuous people try to talk him out of it! In fact, it would sound more polite if, instead of cruelty, people were to accuse, mutter about and praise us as having a sort of “wild honesty” --- free, very free spirits that we are: --- and perhaps this is what our reputation will really be --- posthumously? In the meantime --- because this won’t be happening for a while --- we are the least likely to dress ourselves up with these sorts of moral baubles and beads: all the work we have done so far has spoiled our taste for precisely this sort of bright opulence. These are beautiful, tinkling, festive words: genuine honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, the heroism of truthfulness, --- there is something about them that makes you swell with pride. But we hermits and marmots, we convinced ourselves a long time ago and in all the secrecy of a hermit’s conscience that even this dignified verbal pageantry belongs among the false old finery, debris, and gold dust of unconscious human vanity, and that the terrible basic text of homo natura must be recognized even underneath these fawning colors and painted surfaces. To translate humanity back into nature; to gain control of the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of homo natura so far; to make sure that, from now on, the human being will stand before the human being, just as he already stands before the rest of nature today, hardened by the discipline of science, --- with courageous Oedipus eyes and sealed up Odysseus ears, deaf to the lures of the old metaphysical bird catchers who have
been whistling to him for far too long: “You are more! You are higher! You have a different origin!” --- This may be a strange and insane task, but it is a task --- who would deny it! Why do we choose it, this insane task? Or to ask it differently: “Why knowledge at all?” --- Everyone will be asking us this. And we who have been prodded so much, we who have asked ourselves the same question a hundred times already, we have not found and are not finding any better answers...  

Much of the passage recalls the theme and tone of GS 109, i.e. facing up to a universe not looking out for human interests or evincing even qualities of human emulation or admiration. This emphasis on being “hardened by the discipline of science” possibly even suggests an association with both avoiding self-serving interpretations of reality and metaphysical anthropocentrism. Taken in conjunction with the earlier passage, Nietzsche implies that he extends his new dehumanized view of nature to the domain of human affairs. He then interprets these affairs with a view of nature stripped of not only anthropomorphisms but also standard value-predicates that elevate humanity above the rest of nature. Undoubtedly, this also includes interpreting humanity independent of any overarching natural teleology in which certain human aims, ends, or qualities, are viewed as intrinsically purposeful in the course of nature. Nietzsche also recalls the order of the task from the original notebook fragment by indicating that human beings must face up to themselves in the manner which, through scientific knowledge, human beings have already stood “before the rest of nature.” Altogether, then, Nietzsche aims to “translate humanity” back into nature as discovered, given, and interpreted by the first part of the task.

Nietzsche, then, sets out certain criteria a philosophical interpretation of nature must meet if it accords with reality as it is, i.e. reality as understood as best as possible by human cognition.

217 BGE: 230
while also guarding against self-serving instincts inevitably involved in the process of interpreting reality. Interpretation, then, of Nietzsche’s own conception of nature as *der Wille zur Macht* charitably requires the best attempt to understand that notion in the light of Nietzsche’s task and the criteria specified for accomplishing such a task. This means that the interpreter first needs to exhaust the possibility of interpreting *der Wille zur Macht* free of anthropomorphisms and metaphysical anthropocentrism, as a part of Nietzsche’s overall objective to interpret nature as much as possible without human, all-too-human errors.

IV. *Der Wille zur Macht*

I now will give an account of Nietzsche’s philosophical interpretation of nature as *der Wille zur Macht*. I primarily contend that any reliable interpretation of this notion must pursue, as far as textual integrity will allow, the view that this conception of nature represents Nietzsche’s attempt to meet the task he set before himself in 1881, and which he later explained in both *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Interpreters then do better to explain the notion as consistent with the then current body of scientific knowledge as far as possible (though not necessarily the then dominant interpretation of that knowledge) in a way that the conception does not slip back into the kind of metaphysics that Nietzsche rejects, and finally, that honors the “task”, i.e. a dehumanized account of nature free of anthropomorphisms and metaphysical anthropocentrism. I first then give a summary account of the notion placing greater emphasis on the published passages. Next I evaluate the notion with regard to the following: a) a subjectivist methodological starting point, b) both metaphorical and conceptual anthropomorphism, c) epistemological anthropocentrism, d) metaphysical anthropocentrism, and finally, e) whether or not it provides a model for understanding an ecosystem.
Nietzsche first publicly introduces his conception poetically in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.\(^{218}\) Here Nietzsche clearly uses the conception fluidly to refer to two distinct levels of natural phenomena. When he first uses the phrase in “On a Thousand and One Goals” Nietzsche describes *der Wille zur Macht* as the underlying force or drive that manifests itself in different moralities that emerge out of unique cultures. Next, in “Self-Overcoming” Nietzsche describes it as the underlying drive or force of all life itself. Nietzsche does here introduce what he finds distinctive in his conception of life from what he takes Schopenhauer, or even how he understands Darwin, to think of life (he, however, mentions neither in the passage). Nietzsche contrasts his conception of life as *der Wille zur Macht* with a “will to existence”, or simply a will to survive. Nietzsche, here, does not flesh out this conception here in any detail. Rather, his mouthpiece, Zarathustra, exhorts his listener to draw a powerful lesson about what it takes for self-mastery by making this fundamental observation about all life. Everything in life serves some kind of more powerful force, so Zarathustra warns his audience of the difficulty and suffering involved in naturally willing one’s own drives in such a way as to command oneself. Nietzsche seems to base his alternative idea of all life as willing power upon observation of the living when he claims, “Wherever I found the living, there I found the will to power.” Nietzsche primarily appears here to use the notion in

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\(^{218}\) TSZ, I: “On a Thousand and One Goals”; II: “On Self-Overcoming” Kaufmann, of course, rightfully traces embryonic prototypes of the idea back to before *Zarathustra*. See his discussion of “middle” period instances where Nietzsche discusses power-relations in both politics and psychology (Kaufmann, 179-198). Even if Nietzsche had fully worked out his conception of the notion before then that would only further support my general interpretative approach of understanding the notion as continuous with Nietzsche’s inaugurated task during the “middle” period. Nor does much hinge on whether or not Nietzsche viewed it then as a psychological principle because that is still an issue even in the later writings, and arguably, acknowledged by Nietzsche himself. The primary interpretative question is, no matter the origin of the idea, whether or not the notion in its later published form fits with Nietzsche’s concerns about metaphysical anthropocentrism and forms of anthropomorphism. Since Kaufmann’s plausible and probable interpretation is still contestable, and if right, would not seriously challenge my reading, I bracket the issue here and find it more interpretatively useful to focus on clear instances where Nietzsche employs the notion in his published writings, none which stand out more, as those selected and discussed in this section. Furthermore, the Nietzsche most discussed and accessed by the general reader is certainly the “later” Nietzsche and not the “middle” Nietzsche.
a poetic fashion while exhorting the listener to take some new fundamental perspective on life itself.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche makes it clear that he intends to use the locution *der Wille zur Macht* to refer to the whole of nature, characterizing every natural phenomenon.\(^{219}\) Nonetheless, Nietzsche applies it in more specific senses to more restricted domains of natural phenomena; i.e., to life itself,\(^{220}\) and to various human-specific social and psychological phenomena.\(^{221}\) In particular, when speaking of the organic at *BGE* 13, he echoes the contrast he gave in “On Self-Overcoming” from *Zarathustra*, i.e. a distinction between a will to simply exist, or to preserve oneself, and *der Wille zur Macht*.

Physiologists should think twice before positioning the drive for self-preservation as the cardinal drive of an organic being. Above all, a living thing wants to *discharge* its strength --- life itself is will to power ---; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of this.\(^{222}\)

Nietzsche later in the book observes that life advances through exploitation and appropriation of other external forces.\(^{223}\) Nietzsche, then, sees life as a pitiless execution of natural forces at work within organic processes. Recall, also, that in *GS* 109, Nietzsche does not view life as intrinsically different from the inorganic. *Beyond Good and Evil* makes this an integral feature of Nietzsche’s understanding of all of nature as expressing *der Wille zur Macht*. Nietzsche, also as in *GS* 109, challenges the typical understanding of science as discovering *laws of nature*.\(^{224}\) He thinks that

\(^{219}\) *BGE*: 22, 36, 186  
\(^{220}\) *BGE*: 13, 259  
\(^{221}\) *BGE*: 9, 23, 44, 51, 198, 211, 227, 257  
\(^{222}\) *BGE*: 13  
\(^{223}\) *BGE*: 259  
\(^{224}\) *BGE*: 22
the exact same scientific data can be viewed not as forces obeying laws but rather as forces as discharging their power, forcing other forces to submit to their discharged power.

Nietzsche gives his most developed account of his interpretation of nature at BGE 36, quoted in its entirety here.

Assuming that our world of desires and passions is the only thing “given” as real, that we cannot get down or up to any “reality” except the reality of our drives (since thinking is only a relation between these drives) --- aren’t we allowed to make the attempt and pose the question as to whether something like this “given” isn’t enough to render the so-called mechanistic (and thus material) world comprehensible as well? I do not mean comprehensible as a deception, a “mere appearance,” a “representation” (in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer); I mean it might allow us to understand the mechanistic world as belonging to the same plane of reality as our affects themselves---, as a primitive form of the world of affect, where everything is contained in a powerful unity before branching off and organizing itself in the organic process (and, of course, being softened and weakened--). We would be able to understand the mechanistic world as kind of life of the drives, where all the organic functions (self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism) are still synthetically bound together --- as a pre-form of life? --- In the end, we are not only allowed to make such an attempt: the conscience of method demands it. Multiple varieties of causation should not be postulated until the attempt to make do with a single one has been taken as far as it will go (--- ad absurdum, if you will). This is a moral of method that cannot be escaped these days; --- it follows “from the definition,” as a mathematician would
say. The question is ultimately whether we recognize the will as, in effect, efficacious, whether we believe in the causality of the will. If we do (and this belief is really just our belief in causality itself ---), then we must make the attempt to hypothetically posit the causality of the will as the only type of causality there is. “Will” can naturally have effects only on “will” --- and not on “matter” (not on “nerves” for instance ---). Enough: we must venture the hypothesis that everywhere “effects” are recognized, will is effecting will --- and that every mechanistic event in which a force is active is really a force and effect of the will. ---- Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is my claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate all efficacious force as: will to power. The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its “intelligible character”— would be just this “will to power” and nothing else. ---225

Nietzsche here gives a hypothetical interpretation of the whole of empirical reality, i.e. what every phenomenon manifests from “within” itself. Throughout the entire text, Nietzsche views every phenomenon as a force that discharges its relative strength compared to other forces, whether as the saint who in asceticism discharges his strength of self-denial, or the philosopher who legislates future value, or a living organism, or even an inorganic force. He makes it clear then that he aims to give an interpretation of all natural phenomena, i.e. an explanation of what appears in each

225 BGE: 36
phenomenon if simply attending to how it appears without any metaphysical assumptions (i.e. postulates concerning God, substance, purpose, etc.). Nietzsche does here, however, make some provisional methodological assumptions regarding the best means to explain and interpret the phenomena themselves. For instance, he adopts the principle of parsimony. He also looks for a means by which to explain both what we take as external and internal with recourse to a single type of “causality.” Remember, Nietzsche already takes it as part of his explanatory project to first understand nature stripped of anthropomorphisms, and then proceed to a naturalistic explanation of humanity. Does he, in the passage above, reverse the order of explanation from how he originally described his task for an interpretation of nature? One need not interpret Nietzsche as doing such. In particular, Nietzsche at BGE 19 breaks down mental phenomena into a complex of the same forces he refers to at the beginning of this passage. At BGE 19, Nietzsche gives his reader an example of an attempt to explain a given human phenomenon, in this case that referred to as the “soul” via an appeal merely to natural processes. For Nietzsche, the natural processes in their constant flux and operation create a social structure that defines what philosophers typically take as the unified self. Returning then to 36, the discussion of drives at the start of the passage already invokes an appeal to primitive natural processes that challenge basic assumptions, e.g. that there is something unique and special about the human subject itself that defies a naturalistic, empirical understanding. When read in conjunction with the “task,” der Wille zur Macht expresses a notion of nature where what is typically taken as distinctively human breaks down into the same forces that compose all life, even all force.

Nietzsche gives a further indication that he takes der Wille zur Macht as a pervasive manifestation expressed in all of empirical reality in On the Genealogy of Morality. In the following passage, Nietzsche makes it clear that he arrives at his interpretation of nature as der
Wille zur Macht simply by reading the “signs”, i.e. interpreting what appears in every empirical exhibition of forces.

But every purpose and use is just a *sign* that the will to power has achieved mastery over something less powerful, and has impressed upon it its own idea [Sinn] of a use function; and the whole history of a ‘thing,’ an organ, a tradition can to this extent be a continuous chain of signs, continually revealing new interpretations and adaptations, the causes of which need not be connected even amongst themselves, but rather sometimes just follow and replace one another at random. The ‘development’ of a thing, a tradition, an organ is therefore certainly not its *progressus* towards a goal, still less is it a logical *progressus*, taking the shortest route with least expenditure of energy and cost, --- instead it is a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subjugation exacted on a thing, added to this the resistances encountered every time, the attempted transformations for the purpose of defence and reaction, and the results, too, of successful countermeasures. The form is fluid, the ‘meaning’ [Sinn] even more so… It is no different inside any individual organism: every time the whole grows appreciably, the ‘meaning’ [Sinn] of the individual organs shifts, -- sometimes the partial destruction of organs, the reduction in their number (for example, by the destruction of intermediary parts) can be a sign of increasing vigour and perfection. To speak plainly: even the partial *reduction in usefulness*, decay and degeneration, loss of meaning [Sinn] and functional purpose, in short death, make up the conditions of true *progressus*: always appearing, as it does, in the form
of the will and way to *greater power* and always emerging victorious at the cost of countless smaller forces.\(^{226}\)

Nietzsche here gives his typical contrast between a teleological interpretation and the kind that he advances regarding every type of phenomenon, from a living organ to a human tradition. His interpretation consists of noting the constant, even at times random, changes appearing in every natural process. These changes, for Nietzsche, add up to fluctuations in the relative strengths of the manifested forces. Every empirical change involves something supplanting, replacing, or destroying something else.

I now will evaluate Nietzsche’s conception of *der Wille zur Macht*. First, recall that Heidegger argued that Nietzsche arrives at his conception of nature from a subjectivist methodological beginning. Heidegger not only thought of this as leading to an anthropomorphic conception of nature, but also implied that this fosters a metaphysical anthropocentric outlook. Nietzsche, however, makes it his explicit task to conceive of nature in a dehumanized fashion. While Nietzsche often indicates the difficulties of escaping from one’s own perspectival conditions, Nietzsche still calls for a philosophy of nature that incorporates multiple perspectives beyond one’s own and makes it clear that intellectual integrity demands that philosophers attempt to get past their human, all too human confines as much as possible. Heidegger claims that although Nietzsche critiques Descartes’ assumption of a unitary, substantial subject, Nietzsche does not, in his alternative foundational argument, manage to escape human subjectivity. Nietzsche displaces the conscious, substantial “I” of Descartes with an unconscious plurality of bodily drives and affects. At *BGE* 36, it first appears that Nietzsche does simply construct a view of the world by projecting the drives and affects of the human body onto every instance of force.

\(^{226}\) GM II: 12

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in the universe. Nietzsche, however, in other passages adds further light on his methodology and this particular conjecture about the drives and inorganic forces. He aims to explain the drives themselves as non-teleological discharges of force. Nietzsche also, as consistent with his critique of Cartesian introspection as superficial, encourages the reading of “signs” from natural history, both from historical texts and from the records of the past etched on present phenomena. Nietzsche also makes a point in *BGE 36* to distinguish himself from the subjectivism of both Berkeley and Schopenhauer. He contrasts their view of the material world as mental representations with his own attempt to elucidate a philosophical interpretation of real natural forces. He appeals to parsimonious explanation and the philosophical task of somehow reconciling what philosophers typically think of as matter and spirit. Nietzsche, then, does not straightforwardly by any means adopt a methodology simply rooted in human subjectivity. He gives every indication that he not only aims to reconceive the human subject in a naturalistic manner. He aims, also, to interpret nature as something radically different from what is human, even if always perceived and understood through given perspectival conditions of the human species.

Nietzsche also makes it clear that he rejects anthropomorphic interpretations of nature. Charity, then, requires that his reader view *der Wille zur Macht* as a designation for a conception of nature free of this problem. Once again, by keeping in mind Nietzsche’s deconstruction of the activity of willing at *BGE 19*, and his frequent criticisms of Schopenhauer’s conception of the will, a reader cannot import neutral senses of “will” independent of this context when reading *BGE 36* without doing the text an injustice. Nietzsche views “willing” as an unconscious natural process in such a manner that it eludes the typical associations of not only human personality, but what philosophers take as a distinctive human cognitive faculty. Nietzsche retains usage of the language of “willing” because he often views himself as responding to his “educator,” Schopenhauer, who
had already developed a peculiar and particular version of the term that does not involve either consciousness or volitional activity but who, for Nietzsche, still commits the error of metaphorical anthropomorphism. Note that to employ a metaphor, particularly one already in usage, does not entail that one commits the mistake of metaphorical anthropomorphism. A philosopher only commits this mistake when she loses sight of the metaphor qua metaphor and mistakenly ascribes the metaphor as an actual property or characteristic of the phenomenon in question, or in the case of Schopenhauer, the underlying noumenal reality of everything. In addition, despite his concern to avoid metaphorical anthropomorphism, Nietzsche, nonetheless, is interested in the most primitive possible form of intentionality.

Nietzsche is not only concerned to avoid metaphorical anthropomorphism. He does not take for granted most customary metaphysical concepts. He also, then, attempts to avoid conceptual anthropomorphism, which he describes as interpreting the world “mythologically.” Consider, for instance, this additional passage on “will” from BGE.

*We* are the ones who invented causation, succession, for-each-other, relativity, compulsion, numbers, law, freedom, grounds, purpose; and if we project and inscribe this symbol world onto things as an “in-itself,” then this is the way we have always done things, namely *mythologically*. The “un-free-will” is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of *strong* and *weak* wills. It is almost always a symptom of what is lacking in a thinker when he senses some compulsion, need, having-to-follow, pressure, un-freedom in every “causal connection” and “psychological necessity.”

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227 BGE: 21
Nietzsche, then, sees no ultimate difference between his reductionist sense of will and physical force. In fact, Nietzsche makes the difficult attempt in *BGE* 36 to try and understand them as, more or less, one and the same. Nietzsche, then, views *der Wille zur Macht* as a designation for the empirical reality of natural forces that neither metaphorically attributes human qualities to nature nor projects reified mental constructs onto natural processes.

Still, does not Nietzsche’s commitment to “perspectivism”, i.e. the view that every perspective on reality by an organic creature is conditioned by the drives, affects, and external circumstances of that creature, make human subjectivity an inevitable feature of his conception of nature? Nietzsche does acknowledge a degree of the inevitability of human drives conditioning mental events and so conceptions of the world. Nevertheless, Nietzsche takes up the difficult task of still making the attempt to think independent of, and even against, human interests. While Nietzsche accentuates the extent to which perspectival conditions rooted in the drives and affects impact the contents of perception and understanding, he also advocates incorporating as many perspectives as possible. Nietzsche also clearly evinces awareness of non-human perspectives, as he had beginning in the “middle” period, and arguably earlier, as shown in this late *Nachlass* passage.

It is obvious that every creature different from us senses different qualities and consequently lives in a different world from that in which we live.\(^{228}\)

Nietzsche then indicates that he takes up epistemological non-anthropocentrism as a methodological commitment that must inform whatever sense his reader construes him as adopting.

\(^{228}\) WP: 565; Hallman, 116
perspectivism. This aspect of his thought then further diffuses the worries concerning subjectivity and anthropomorphism.

Finally, Nietzsche makes it abundantly clear that nature does not revolve around human interests. His conception of nature as der Wille zur Macht perfectly embodies his unequivocal rejection of metaphysical anthropocentrism. His description and exposition of der Wille zur Macht always accentuates its complete overturning of every bit of humanity’s wishful thinking about the natural world. The necessity of its non-teleological fluctuations may or may not advance human flourishing, even the conditions for organic processes. It defies Romanticist sentiments about the natural world and eludes nearly every value-predicate that humans feel tempted to ascribe to nature when faced with its beauty or wonder. In particular, the value-predicates associated with traditional morality express the very opposite of the real operative conditions of nature. Nietzsche often prides himself on viewing nature as “immoral” and his so-called “immoralism” can’t be understood apart from the his naturalistic translation of humanity back into nature, i.e. back into the indifferent vicissitudes of der Wille zur Macht. Nietzsche does not really view nature as immoral but rather as amoral. However, Nietzsche often uses this trope as a rhetorical strategy against both the idealistic, Romanticized conceptions of nature and implied moral condemnations of nature by comparison to moral value-predicates. If Nietzsche views life itself as “the exception of exceptions,” how much more often, then, does he constantly announce to his reader that metaphysical anthropocentrism is as dead as God? Nature simply “does not care” about human exceptionality.

Nietzsche did not publish much of help in assessing the compatibility of der Wille zur Macht with contemporary ecological conceptions of natural processes. Nowhere in the published passages does Nietzsche precisely speak of a recycling of energy. However, as Hallman rightly
noted in his selection of passages from the Nachlass, Nietzsche does indicate that he explores this possibility, i.e. of thinking of der Wille zur Macht as an interlocked system of interdependent forces of energy, the interactions of which, sustains the whole system. Nonetheless, anachronistically attributing a robust ecology to Nietzsche does neither full justice to both ecology nor his philosophy. Nonetheless, Nietzsche does articulate a conception of nature that strikingly resembles many of the themes that emerge from modern ecology. In particular, because Nietzsche rejects any firm distinction between organic and inorganic processes he facilitates an understanding of them by which they mutually impact each other, often in a cyclic fashion.

Interestingly enough, in Nietzsche’s description of natural processes he often avails himself of the metaphors utilized in each of the traditionally dominant models of ecosystems, i.e. viewing a set of natural forces as analogous to an organism, a community, and as complex of material and energy flows. Often, Nietzsche seems to take a natural phenomenon and describe it in reductionist terms, in particular, in terms of the next domain of inquiry down from the given domain of the described object, e.g. minds as societies, societies as communities of living organisms, communities of living organisms as a plethora of interacting physical forces, etc. He describes the human psyche as a social structure, and BGE 19 seems to approach viewing the human soul as an ecosystem delineated by the community model. Nietzsche then, in his description of human societies, suggests that he conceives them as living organisms, with their philosophical and linguistic mental structures the sign languages of what a contemporary North American ecologist might designate as a continent wide ecosystem. Finally, Nietzsche then aims to reduce organic processes to the expressions of a complex array of material and energy flows, i.e. physical forces.

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229 WP: 638-9, 1066-7 Nietzsche also speaks in such a way as to suggest that he sees the “total living organic world” as a unified whole despite its manifest plurality (WP: 678).
230 BGE: 20
that discharge their surpluses of power-quanta, akin to the thermodynamic model of an ecosystem. Nietzsche often seems to engage in this pattern of reducing one level of natural complexity to its underlying subsidiary level of complexity. This also serves as further evidence that Nietzsche, as consistent with his anti-teleology, tends to work against subjectivist, anthropomorphic, and anthropocentric tendencies at work in human attempts to conceive and understand the natural world.

V. Revisiting the Issues

I now work backwards responding to the questions posed by the literature as given above both at the end of chapter 1 and at the start of chapter 2.

1. Are Nietzsche’s own views on nature compatible with his well-documented critique of anthropomorphism? Does Nietzsche criticize different kinds of anthropomorphism?

2. To what extent does Nietzsche critique epistemological anthropocentrism?

3. Are Nietzsche’s own views on nature compatible with his well-documented critique of metaphysical anthropocentrism?

First, not only are Nietzsche’s views of nature and reality compatible with his well-documented critique of metaphysical anthropocentrism, they capture the content and spirit of the position. Nietzsche makes it clear that the world as conceived as der Wille zur Macht is not centered on human beings. He takes seriously the concern over how humanity may or may not cope with this facet of reality. Nietzsche, in fact, tends to suggest a historical narrative in which
the human species developed only by thinking of itself as the center of the natural world and a brief survey of religious cosmologies, in particular that of the medieval cosmology sublimely expressed by Dante, lends great plausibility to such a macrohistorical understanding of human cultural evolution. Nietzsche praises and censures the modern scientific revolution precisely because its progressive advances often represent an inaugural attempt in human history to discover and understand the world apart from considerations of human happiness, purpose, and meaning. This may constitute his central philosophical task, the occasion for his attempt at philosophy, to understand and interpret reality after the death of a metaphysically conceived God. Though Nietzsche questions the value of truth he never appears to personally waver himself from facing up to the truth with intellectual honesty, and it is only this aspect of his intellectual virtue that leads him to question its value in the first place. For Nietzsche, the ugliest truth is that no one is taking care of humanity anymore and that nature qua nature, conceived as an “indifferent” plethora of chaotic forces, certainly does “not care” one iota whether or not some part of itself destroys itself or falls victim to a cataclysmic natural catastrophe. If the human species ever manages to acquire a goal or a purpose it can only come about through their own cultural evolution and construction. The complete rejection of metaphysical anthropocentrism constitutes Nietzsche’s heroic attempt to incorporate the abyss of truth and so informs his evaluation and critique of morality, and his attempt to call for and implement the creation of new values for the human species.

Nietzsche, though not explicitly critiquing epistemological anthropocentrism, perhaps in part for his legitimate worries about the attempt to get outside of “our human corner” constantly advocates the practice of considering to whatever extent possible, different perspectival conditions other than one’s own. In fact, this enables Nietzsche’s own text to appear so multiply rich in a variety of estimations and evaluations of natural and cultural phenomena, all in tension with one
another. His poetic and imaginative invocation of the perspective of the butterfly at D 553 beautifully expresses this aspect of Nietzsche’s thought-life. Nietzsche, then, despite his epistemological concerns over the past failed philosophical attempts at attaining objectivity in the enterprise of human knowledge, gestures towards an epistemic awareness of other possible non-human perspectives on the natural world.

Finally, Nietzsche clearly critiques both metaphorical and conceptual anthropomorphism though never drawing an explicit distinction between the two errors. Nietzsche warns against both the attribution of human features of personality, human cognitive faculties, and qualities of both human character and cognitive functioning (e.g. “wisdom”), often coextensive with value-predicates (e.g. “beauty” and “wisdom”), to the natural world as a whole or in part. Nietzsche lucidly and effectively critiques anthropomorphic conceptions of nature and so articulates that the avoidance of anthropomorphisms is a criteria which his own conception of nature must satisfy. Nietzsche sets himself and us the near impossible task of affirming a “cruelly” indifferent universe (often through the metaphor of unrequited love or a tragic drama between him and life, or truth, conceived as an alluring and powerfully playful unhinged woman).231 Much more textual argumentation than has appeared in the literature on this topic would be required to show that Nietzsche completely reverses his resolute non-anthropomorphism in his own articulation of nature as der Wille zur Macht. I have shown that this notion need not be conceived as an anthropomorphism and have proffered several contextual reasons for precisely seeing it as the culmination of Nietzsche’s attempt to think of nature stripped of anthropomorphisms.

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231 See both the opening of BGE and the climax of Part III of Zarathustra. Also, think of his love for the opera Carmen and so its musical celebration of the maddening effect of both tender love and violent passion within Jose for his exotic beloved.
Nietzsche’s interpreter then has several reasons to understand his views on value and morality against the backdrop of a naturalistic project--- which includes the rejection of anthropomorphisms, metaphysical anthropocentrism, and a challenge to epistemological anthropocentrism--- to interpret and so necessarily reevaluate, and so “redeem,” humanity and nature from past metaphysical and religious blunders. The rejection of anthropomorphisms, metaphysical and epistemological anthropocentrism, do not logically entail the acceptance of axiological and ethical non-anthropocentrism. However, the rejection of one kind of anthropocentrism as an error or arbitrary assumption casts suspicion on the assumption elsewhere. Nietzsche’s views of nature and reality undoubtedly matter for assessing how he thinks of axiological and ethical issues. I now turn to his relationship to the issues of axiological and ethical anthropocentrism.
Chapter 3: Nietzsche’s Views on Values and Morality Concerning the Distant Future and Beyond the Human Species

I. The Issues

Nietzsche never criticizes it by name, but Nietzsche clearly rejects axiological anthropocentrism as this chapter will document and explain below. Nietzsche views axiological anthropocentrism as closely related to metaphysical anthropocentrism and typically does not criticize the one without criticizing the other.

Concerning the issue of ethical anthropocentrism, Acampora characterizes Nietzsche’s discourse as homo-exclusive. Nietzsche does clearly tend to focus on human affairs, especially in discussions of values and morality. His concern with morality as a human cultural institution appears to foster this impression even more in the later writings. Certainly, Nietzsche’s works raise critical questions on the relationship between axiological anthropocentrism and his critique of morality and “revaluation of all values.” His relationship to ethical anthropocentrism proves even more complex given the stringency of his critique of morality. His critique of morality invites the question of whether or not Nietzsche even utilizes a conception of moral considerability, i.e. a conception of moral status concerning whose, or what, values need to be considered. Certainly, the sense in which Nietzsche might employ a conception of moral considerability greatly differs from traditional, most contemporary ways of understanding moral considerability. Nietzsche appears at times to exact great demands from his reader approximating what seems like very high moral standards but also embraces “immoralism” and clearly looks to deregulate the human conscience.
The question about Nietzsche’s axiology poses great interpretative questions. In particular, there is the question concerning whether or not Nietzsche views power as the only value in the world. Heidegger, recall, views Nietzsche as conceiving of power itself as the criterion of value. Nietzsche, no doubt, must minimally think of all values as expressions of power and given his constant theme of “enhancement”, whether of the human species, or life itself, indicates that power plays an important role in his axiological commitments. Heidegger though went on to claim that Nietzsche, by construing power as the criterion of value, justifies an apology of the human domination of the planet. Heidegger, then views an axiology of power as implying axiological anthropocentrism. Nietzsche, however, does not conceive power as merely exclusive to human beings. Nietzsche, in fact, takes on the ultimate challenge of affirming every natural expression of power within the interlocking web of fate. Two questions then emerge concerning Nietzsche’s axiology and power, i.e. whether or not Nietzsche, indeed, does construe power as the criterion of value, and, whether or not this squares with his criticisms of axiological anthropocentrism.

Nietzsche, as this chapter makes manifest, clearly adopts a long-term ethical perspective, a necessary ingredient for an environmental ethics. The question, then, arises, given his criticisms of axiological anthropocentrism, of the manner and to what extent he recognizes other values and moral considerations beyond the human species. A reader might think that despite his criticisms of axiological anthropocentrism that Nietzsche actually articulates an ethical conception characterized by long-term anthropocentrism. This reading though has a lot of evidence against it. Acampora, though appearing to waver on the issue of whether or not Nietzsche evinces an anthropocentric outlook, claims that Nietzsche holds to some kind of eco-natural holism despite his homo-exclusive ethical discourse. Acampora does not adequately explain this view he
attributes to Nietzsche. The first option, then, beyond construing Nietzsche as advancing a long-term anthropocentrism centers around whether or not Nietzsche adopts eco-natural holism, and how to more precisely conceive of such a holism, particularly as compared to contemporary forms of holism. A version of holism need not refer to all forms of life, perhaps only sentient creatures, in which sentience or certain other traits of life are prized over and above the particular individual organisms. Nietzsche often treats of “life” itself in an axiological manner, and, given the context of these discussions, indicates that he does not merely refer to human life. Such discussions, as given below, suggest that Nietzsche adopts some sort of biocentrism. So Nietzsche might embrace a holism also characterized by biocentrism. Recall that Storey attributes to Nietzsche what he terms “hierarchical biocentrism.” Unfortunately, Storey does not explicitly address the issue of holism, but makes a strong case for viewing Nietzsche as a biocentrist and, in particular, with some sort of hierarchical conception of biological value. Finally, Parkes has claimed that Nietzsche affirms an even more radical nature ethic, akin to Taoism and Zen Buddhism, in which Nietzsche advances “beyond biocentrism.” So, once resolving the question of to what extent Nietzsche endorses an axiological and, or, ethical non-anthropocentrism, the question remains on how to conceive of this position with more precision.

Regardless of the more extensive discussions concerning axiology throughout Nietzsche’s writings the literature so far has given considerable attention to the issue of how to interpret *der Übermensch*. Positions range from seeing this figure as the ultimate justification of human planetary domination all the way to accentuating the proclamation that such a being brings “meaning to the earth” in such a way as to “esteem” the earth, or, that this represents an exemplary

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232 Recall that Acampora does not adequately define or explain this term but suggests that it refers to a position that views species on equal terms. This term, then, does not likely capture Nietzsche’s position, even though Nietzsche’s anti-egalitarianism appears to be only explicitly applied to evaluations of human social relations.
type of being who quite literally expresses Nietzsche’s advance past some form of anthropocentrism. No interpretation can definitively solve this disagreement. However, as in the case of *der Wille zur Macht*, the surrounding context of Nietzsche’s other philosophical commitments can shed light on how to best interpret what Nietzsche designates with this term. Nonetheless, *der Übermensch* remains more elusive, poetic, and enigmatic than *der Wille zur Macht*. Here, Nietzsche clearly skirts the edge between a literary expression or character and a philosophical conception.

Finally, even granting that all the issues above pan out in favor of a “greener” Nietzsche, there still remains the great problem posed by Acampora of how to think about what Nietzsche asks of his reader to willingly and joyfully affirm if he or she also takes on board and embraces *amor fati*. Acampora questions whether or not this might entail accepting and affirming every human impulse, even those that advance an imperialistic expansion of dominion over the natural world.

The interpretation below emphasizes a reading attuned to the chronology of Nietzsche’s comments about the above issues taken all together. After working through each phase of Nietzsche’s philosophy, then, I return to these issues and deliver my considered judgments on each particular question.

**II. Nietzsche’s Early Environmental Ethic**

Schopenhauer certainly influenced the young Nietzsche, and probably in no greater way than in the sphere of ethical thought. The early texts of Nietzsche demonstrate a deep awareness and sensitivity to the issues of animal suffering and the value of nature as a holistic entity.
Nietzsche, undoubtedly, took up these themes from his readings of *The World as Will and Presentation* and *Parerga and Paralipomena*. Gary Varner and Michael Allen Fox have both argued that Schopenhauerian thought has the untapped potential to make a substantive influence on contemporary environmental ethics.

Varner argues that Schopenhauer’s metaethics provides a conceptual framework amenable to a synthesis between individualism and holism, i.e. according value and moral considerability to individual living organisms, on the one hand, and according the same to natural holistic entities such as species or ecosystems on the other, respectively. Varner argues that Schopenhauer recognizes the moral patiency of every irreducible instance of formative nature, i.e. an individuated aspect of the one underlying unified will which when known by its “intelligible character” allows for an understanding of its behavior in response to every possible contingency. According to Varner, both individual organisms and holistic entities meet this specification. For some animal species, individuality, in the requisite sense of individuation, which entails that the members of that species has individuated desires and so are susceptible to suffering, manifests itself either exactly, or nearly, as completely the same in every member of the species, while for more developed species like human beings, “genuine individuality”, i.e. manifesting individuation like no other natural phenomena including other members of the species, can be obtained. Schopenhauer’s view of individuation and metaphysical unity is admittedly somewhat paradoxical. Individuation generally refers to a natural entity’s quality of being distinguished from some other being. Schopenhauer views this as ultimately the illusory product of cognitive presentation. So, everything really is unified and not distinct, but when viewed as an object or

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233 For a biographical account of Nietzsche’s reading of Schopenhauer, see Brobjer, 28-32.
234 Varner (1985); Fox (2006)
presentation of the mind is seen as individuated, and so warrants moral status. Nonetheless, given his ethical commitments Schopenhauer appears to imply that he views individuation as marking some kind of distinctive ontological and ethical status of an individuated natural object, or an individuated expression of “will.” Schopenhauer, according to Varner, recognizes the moral significance of individuated wills and also the holistic interconnection of all phenomena as multiple expressions of but one unified will. That dual commitments to both the value and moral considerability of holistic entities--- such as a species of bacteria---, and individual organisms,--- such as a rabbit--- may generate irresolvable moral conflicts, counts as a point of strength for Schopenhauer’s ethical outlook, according to Varner. Varner explains his appraisal of irresolvability as follows.

It might be argued that a casuistry which leaves such dilemmas {i.e. those moral situations in which every conceivable course of action leads to a bad outcome} unresolved is no casuistry at all. However, I take the recognition of genuine moral conflict to be another virtue of the Schopenhaurian approach, rather than a potential vice. To allow the irresolvability of some moral conflicts does not commit us to nihilism. On the contrary, it is the undeniable reality of value for each and every individual will which simultaneously extends moral patiency to nonhuman animals and insures the existence of irresolvable moral conflict.

The evil of an agonizing death is in no way reduced or eliminated by other facts of a situation. If we say that a predator killing its prey is good or right because the
former’s species is endangered and the latter’s not, then we have effectively denied the moral reality of the prey animal’s suffering and death.\textsuperscript{235}

For Varner, then, the irresolvability of moral conflicts tracks the moral reality of genuine competing biological values in the natural world. A view, then, that accepts such moral situations demonstrates that it fully tracks all the values at play at the time of moral deliberation with not only sensitivity but also an objective awareness to everything that warrants moral consideration.

Fox acknowledges the work of Varner and also emphasizes particular aspects of Schopenhauer’s life and work such as his critical, condemnatory attitude, evinced also in his writings, towards the practice of vivisection. Fox goes on to argue that Schopenhauer’s ethical principles provides for the “following general directives: (1) form a compassionate kinship with other sentient beings; (2) take on the role of benevolent stewards of nature; and (3) choose lifestyles that cause minimal harm to fellow humans, non-humans, and the planet.”\textsuperscript{236}

Both Varner and Fox, then, minimally, establish that Schopenhauer not only took animal suffering seriously, but thought every instance of will as a significant locus of moral concern. The reader should keep these aspects of Schopenhauer’s thought in mind when confronting the texts of Nietzsche’s early published works. I now turn to these texts.

Nietzsche, in \textit{The Birth of Tragedy}, focused on questions of aesthetics, but recall that Del Caro accentuated the emphasis of the work on a deep union with nature in and through aesthetic experiences. Nietzsche announces this theme right in the opening section when, in his description of the Dionysian, he emphasizes that “…nature, alienated, inimical, or subjugated, celebrates once

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{235} Varner, 228
\textsuperscript{236} Fox, 382
\end{footnotesize}
more her festival of reconciliation with her lost son, humankind.” Nietzsche, however, does not fully explicate what he means by this union nor does he draw precisely any substantive axiological or ethical implications from this claim beyond that of his call for a rebirth of tragedy.

Nietzsche though first intimates his critical attitude towards axiological anthropocentrism, even possibly ethical anthropocentrism, in the first of his *Untimely Meditations*. In Section 6, Nietzsche critiques the blind egoism underlying the anthropocentric conception of the universe presupposed in the “cultural philistinism” which he finds so well exemplified by the then popular author, David Strauss. In the next section, 7, Nietzsche goes on to criticize Strauss’ uncritical acceptance of Darwin. Nietzsche finds this acceptance incompatible with Strauss’ general ethical outlook. Nietzsche here seems to suggest that Darwin undercuts the axiological anthropocentrism at the heart of this outlook. Nietzsche in the first meditation often associates Strauss with Hegel, and in his next meditation confirms that the over-arching Hegelianism of his age fosters an absurd metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism. He begins a series of critical comments against Hegelian presumptuousness in Section 8 and then makes his criticism explicit in the next section, 9, extending it to the general outlook of, not just Hegel, but the typical modern man.

He stands high and proud upon the pyramid of the world-process; as he lays the keystone of his knowledge at the top of it he seems to call out to nature all around him: “We have reached the goal, we are the goal, we are nature perfected.”

Nietzsche, in the rest of the section, demonstrates a strong interest in the creative development of an axiological goal for the human species. He implies the constructed status of this goal because he strongly doubts and criticizes any attempt to extract such a goal for human beings from nature.

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237 BT: 1
238 UM II: 9
itself, i.e. there is no given overarching teleology in the universe by which human beings can align themselves. Nietzsche did not expand on either criticism above in either meditation in such a way as to draw out any kind of specific environmental ethical implication. His third meditation, however, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, does specify and imply a specific ethical task as related to the natural environment.

Here I present an argument that the climax of Nietzsche’s early philosophy in *Schopenhauer as Educator* culminates in a substantive environmental ethical position, one that merits consideration.

Recall that Max Hallman argued that Nietzsche, during his early period held an anthropocentric view of the relationship of the human species to nature and only later developed a deep ecological outlook on life.²³⁹ Not only does Hallman fail to analyze in what sense Nietzsche’s position classifies as anthropocentric in this early text, but he misses significant challenges to this assessment. He even fails to recognize that--- if, indeed, Nietzsche does advance a position nearly identical to that of deep ecology anywhere in his corpus--- the best evidence for such an interpretation is actually here in *Schopenhauer as Educator*!

Nietzsche clearly articulates his view in Section 5, and begins to tease out the societal and cultural implications of this view in Section 6, where he appears to employ a conception of species welfare. The beginning sections of the meditation visit the problems of education, culture, and different types of human exemplars as Nietzsche works his way up to the pronouncement of the following principle at the conclusion of Section 5:

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²³⁹ Hallman, 110
I argue here that this principle, according to Nietzsche’s conception of the philosopher, artist, and saint, grounds an environmental ethics that in important respects does not straightforwardly represent an anthropocentric perspective but contains significant elements of non-anthropocentrism. An exploration of the context in which Nietzsche delivers this principle, and his conception of each of these distinctive exemplars, i.e. philosopher, artist, and saint, indicates that Nietzsche does not here merely imply the perfection of humanity, but, indeed, the perfecting of nature itself.

I now give my reasons for viewing Nietzsche’s early position here as one best understood as justifying ethical concern for the environment. First, recall from chapter 2 that Nietzsche’s early writings before his third meditation demonstrate an awareness of the problems of anthropomorphism and metaphysical anthropocentrism. Numerous early notebook passages either flag or reference the problem of anthropomorphism. Nietzsche often makes critical remarks against anthropomorphism for its human-centered and self-serving perspective, indicating that, for Nietzsche, anthropomorphism typically involves an underlying axiological anthropocentric perspective. Nietzsche also satirizes and critically assesses various anthropocentric tendencies, as, for example, in his unpublished essay on truth and also in the first two meditations as discussed above. The context, then, as explored both in chapter 2 and earlier in this section, inform Nietzsche’s articulation of his ethical principle.
Second, before Nietzsche declares his ethical principle he earlier in Section 5 claims that the feeling of sympathy for the sufferings of animals marks a “more profoundly feeling” person.\textsuperscript{243} For Nietzsche, animals suffer senselessly without the cognitive means by which to understand their own existence and so why they suffer. Nietzsche also alludes to the Indian religious tradition and its awareness of animal suffering. In the doctrine of reincarnation, “senselessness” is interpreted out of animal suffering, animals being but “the guilt-laden souls” of human beings. Very few human beings can actually recognize the senselessness of animal suffering. Nietzsche views this exceptional trait, i.e. the feeling of sympathy for non-human animals, characterizing human exemplars, as metaphysically significant. It is as if nature “presses towards man” and through the exceptional sympathizers “existence at last holds up before itself a mirror in which life appears no longer senseless but in its metaphysical significance.” Nietzsche does not make clear what he has in mind by life’s “metaphysical significance” but he contrasts the understanding of this significance with the uncomprehending state of an animal driven on by desire and fear. The recognition of animal suffering by exceptional human beings, for Nietzsche, oddly alleviates the senselessness of this condition experienced by animals. This recognition, of course, does not alleviate their actual sufferings---not generally, but possibly in particular interactions with sentient animals, as implied by the life of the saint described later in the passage. However, given that one part of nature, i.e. exceptional human beings, sympathize with another part of nature, i.e. sentient animals, Nietzsche implies that the suffering itself somehow no longer lacks \textit{any} meaning. The saint he describes at the end of the section exemplifies such an exceptional sympathizer. Nature itself,

\textsuperscript{243} UM III: 5
through these types, has provided the means by which it extends to itself metaphysical consolation.

And so nature at last needs the saint, in whom the ego is completely melted away and whose life of suffering is no longer felt as his own life--- or is hardly so felt--- but as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things: the saint in whom there appears that miracle of transformation which the game of becoming never hits upon, that final and supreme becoming-human after which all nature presses and urges for its redemption from itself.244

Since Nietzsche appears to be taking on board some sense in which nature is unified, like Schopenhauer, he implies that it is not merely human beings who are consoled but all the sentient parts of nature taken as a unified whole, i.e. all sentient beings together. For some animal and environmental ethicists, sympathy for animal suffering indicates the way in which one may come to acknowledge the moral considerability of animals.

Third, Nietzsche questions any fundamental ethical distinction between human beings and non-human animals. He does go on to utilize a distinction between them only in a way that reinforces the exceptionality of the ability of certain human beings to take a unique perspective with regards to life beyond the human species.

Yet let us reflect: where does the animal cease, where does man begin? --- man, who is nature’s sole concern!245

244 UM III: 5
245 UM III: 5
Here Nietzsche juxtaposes his fundamental question with the assertion that humanity is the “sole concern” of nature, an ironic claim given the general context of the critical questions that Nietzsche raises in other parts of his early philosophy against anthropocentric tendencies and the immediate context of the discussion of animal suffering. Nietzsche acknowledges that most human beings do not meaningfully differ from animals in that they pursue happiness indiscriminately with blind desire. A few human beings, however, can come to reflect beyond their own immediate horizon and “press” towards a distinctive kind of humanity “high above us.” Once again, Nietzsche characterizes this exceptionality as the ability to understand the sufferings of non-human animals.

This exceptional quality of sympathy fits with his conception of the saint. Nietzsche’s fundamental ethical principle, however, advocates for the production of three types of human exemplar--- philosopher, artist, and saint. His explication of each of these constitutive types nonetheless involves the characterization of each as nature-directed. Nietzsche characterizes each type by a defining task. The philosopher aims to comprehend the totality of existence and the whole of nature and represents nature’s own “self-enlightenment.” The artist also participates in this “self-enlightenment” by giving a “clear and finished picture” of nature. Finally, the saint cultivates a “profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things.”

The tripartite structure of this conception registers a traditional triad of philosophical considerations: cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical. The fundamental task of culture involves each of these elements but Nietzsche does not make clear to what extent they function separately or in complete unison. Still, his principle calls for the production of each type in oneself. In each case, Nietzsche defines the task and type by their relation to the rest of nature beyond the human species. Philosophers do not aim to simply understand human beings. Artists must not merely
depict scenes of human life. Nature, in each case, holds a relationship to itself through the activity of these exceptional types. Through the philosopher and artist nature beholds “that which it could see only obscurely in the agitation of its evolution.” Nietzsche’s description of the saint remarkably anticipates the philosophical position of Arne Naess. The saint identifies with living creatures beyond the confining objectives and desires of the ego. Like Naess’ description of the process of “Self-realization” the Nietzschean saint expands his or her own sense of self to include other living things. Other forms of life, then, matter for Nietzsche, and the fact that they can suffer, or aspects of their lives may or may not go well, indicates the presupposition here of both ethical and axiological non-anthropocentrism. The principle that Nietzsche advances does not, of course, contain direct duties to animals. One acts so as only to promote the production of exemplary human types. However, Nietzsche characterizes these types as non-anthropocentric, nature-directed exemplars who in conjunction with one another, represent the commitment that other living creatures both have values and do matter. Nietzsche recognizes the desires and sufferings of sentient animals and the saint identifies with the lives of every creature. Furthermore, all of nature is worthy of intellectual comprehension and aesthetic contemplation, what the soul really yearns for beyond the mere satiation of egoistic desires.

To climb as high into the pure icy Alpine air as a philosopher ever climbed, up to where all the mist and obscurity cease and where the fundamental constitution of things speaks in a voice rough and rigid but ineluctably comprehensible! Merely to think of this makes this soul infinitely solitary; if its wish were fulfilled, however, if its glance once fell upon things straight and bright as a beam of light, if shame, fear, and desire died away--- what word could then describe the condition it would be in, that new and enigmatic animation without agitation with
which it would, like the soul of Schopenhauer, lie extended over the tremendous hieroglyphics of existence, over the petrified doctrine of becoming, not as the darkness of night but as the glowing light of dawn streaming out over all the world.²⁴⁶

Nietzsche here manifests his early Romanticist tendency to view nature itself as an ideal, and as he says in the next paragraph, as a “clear and finished picture.”

Nietzsche, also, clearly indicates that the relationship of humanity to nature is the central topic of ethical concern. Nietzsche does, however, leave a lot of unanswered questions. For example, he begins these considerations with reflections on sentient animals, often mentions “the whole of nature” and concludes that the saint identifies with “all living things.” Clearly, Nietzsche does not here distinguish precisely between animal ethics and biocentrism, and “nature” for him certainly includes non-living natural phenomena. Nonetheless, Nietzsche characterizes the saint as adopting a biocentric perspective and his particular conception entails both ethical and axiological non-anthropocentrism. Fourthly, then, his explication of the constitutive elements of his fundamental principle indicate non-anthropocentric commitments in the cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical lives of exemplary human types.

Throughout Section 5, however, Nietzsche views a particular group of human exemplars as “perfecting nature” or “redeeming” nature. This talk smacks of anthropocentrism, right? For Nietzsche, only the activities of human beings, the perfecting of human characteristics, gets promoted as of value. I contend, however, that it does so only on the surface.

²⁴⁶ UM III: 5
Metaphysical and ethical positions may not obviously reflect latent or obscured tendencies of human-centeredness. For instance, the cosmology and ethics of Dante, exemplifying the general outlook of medieval theology may, because of its ascriptions of metaphysical reality, and value, to God and the angels, seem like a set of non-anthropocentric views. However, one might challenge whether or not this conception of the supernatural obscures a hidden tendency to actually function in an anthropocentric manner. Such a view might on the surface evince non-anthropocentrism but actually coordinate a set of fundamental anthropocentric views and tendencies, i.e. obscure rather different propositional assumptions or practices. Vice versa, in principle, a view that on the surface qualifies as an anthropocentric position might in turn obscure ways in which the outlook actually functions in a non-anthropocentric manner. In what follows, the terms “surface” and “latent” shall characterize this dichotomy.

So take again this example of the medieval theology and cosmology depicted in Dante’s *Divina Commedia*. God places the earth at the center of the cosmos with all of creation there to serve the purposes of human existence. The surface propositional content prevents the straightforward assessment of these views as manifesting metaphysical, ethical, or axiological anthropocentrism. God, a non-human, is worshipped as the fount of all value in the universe. However, the ways in which these views function psychologically, in ethical practice, and in the worldviews of the adherents manifest metaphysical, ethical, and axiological anthropocentric tendencies of thought and practice. God literally centered the universe on the crowning achievement of his creation, humanity, and all nature serves the purposes of human beings.

Nietzsche’s worldview as given in this early text appears as an inversion of this caricature of the medieval outlook. For Nietzsche, human beings only realize their ethical significance
through their purpose for nature. The distinctive ethical significance of human beings emerges only through their attitudes, practices, and engagement with the rest of the natural world beyond themselves. This then inverts the order of significance as given in the medieval outlook where nature has meaning only to the extent it serves some purpose for human beings. For the “perfecting” of nature, Nietzsche uses the term Vollendung which connotes a completion. An analysis of the surface propositional content suggests that human beings play the leading role in Nietzsche’s metaphysical conception of nature, completing nature’s own implied teleological structure. However, as explained above, the explication of the content of this Vollendung, i.e. that which is specified by the ethical principle to be promoted, consists of ethical attitudes, beliefs, and practices best characterized as non-anthropocentric. The metaphysical conception of nature does not affect the ethical and axiological propositional content of the view. So, fifthly, the metaphysical conception itself is at best only a form of surface metaphysical anthropocentrism, obscuring the latent senses in which Nietzsche evinces a strong commitment to an ethical and axiological non-anthropocentrism.

However, Nietzsche may not even literally endorse this metaphysical view on the surface, i.e. that the human species completes the inherent teleological processes of nature. Once again, I use the surface/latent distinction as a way of distinguishing between the straightforward propositional content of a view and the way the view either functions in practice or obscures other hidden propositional assumptions. The speaker of such propositions need not view the propositional content as metaphorical. The Christian believer during the medieval era certainly did not think of God, angels, and supernatural processes as metaphors. Nietzsche, however, might well traffic in metaphor when he writes of “nature perfecting itself.” This metaphor suggests the commitment to and usage of two notions that Nietzsche elsewhere already rejects in
his early philosophy, i.e. an over-arching transcendent teleology and anthropomorphism.\textsuperscript{247} The metaphor that Nietzsche employs in Section 5 suggests an ascription of agency to nature. Given his critical remarks against both teleology and anthropomorphism elsewhere, reading Nietzsche as literally endorsing a conception in which nature somehow proceeds like an agent according to some teleological structure requires an interpretative argument.

Finally, even if an interpretative argument can be made out that Nietzsche does in fact evince anthropocentrism either in the metaphysical, ethical, or axiological senses more so than my account allows this in no way prevents the characterization of this view as an environmental ethics. Nietzsche advances a conception of human exceptionality as nature-directed and calls for the promotion of a human type characterized by a biocentric perspective and profound connection with the experiences of other living creatures.

Before moving to the middle period, I will comment on one other important aspect of Nietzsche’s commentary here that will become more important in assessing his later work and his overall ethical commitments. Nietzsche, also, in this early text, first indicates that he presupposes a conception of species welfare, which he claims is accessible in “observation of any species of the animal or plant world.”\textsuperscript{248} In essence, he contends that the good of a species lies in its exceptional individual exemplars, i.e. “the more uncommon, more powerful, more complex, more fruitful.”\textsuperscript{249} He also claims that this value outweighs the good of the aggregate and those who appear last in time, i.e. earlier members of the species do not merely exist for the sake of the later members. Unfortunately, Nietzsche offers no justification for this view beyond

\textsuperscript{247} See, e.g., footnote 188 above for the rejection of various anthropomorphisms and the following passages for the rejection of an over-arching teleology: KSA 19[131], [139], [160]; 29[233]; “Truth and Lies”: I
\textsuperscript{248} UM III: 6
\textsuperscript{249} UM III: 6
appeal to observation nor does he even explain it other than to vaguely intimate that exceptional individuals have some kind of greater evolutionary value over and above the mass of exemplars of its given species.

Before advancing to Nietzsche’s middle period, it also may prove helpful to review the ground covered so far concerning his early philosophy. Nietzsche, saturated in Schopenhauer’s writings, particularly viewing his philosophy as a personal ideal despite reservations about many of its metaphysical and aesthetic claims, was certainly influenced by its sentiocentrism, or pathocentrism. When Nietzsche articulated his own reflections on nature he was not so careful as to single out sentience itself as the prime criterion of moral status, despite his recognition of the moral significance of animal suffering. Nietzsche was also partly influenced by the Romanticist tendency to view nature as an aesthetic ideal, mostly evident in his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche appears to blur together the significance of the aesthetic value of nature as a whole, sentience, “all living creatures”, and personal excellence or virtue, when he crystallizes his maxim to produce the nature-directed exemplars of the philosopher, artist, and saint. Nonetheless, his third meditation provides several reasons for viewing his maxim as an environmental ethic. The following are the most prominent. Not only does Nietzsche recognize the significance of animal suffering but he praises sympathy for this suffering as exceptionally distinctive. He also questions whether there is even any meaningful ethical distinction to be made between humans and non-human animals. Finally, he values human types fully absorbed by the comprehensible, aesthetic, and morally significant aspects of nature represented by his conceptions of the philosopher, artist, and saint, respectively.
Nietzsche’s Long-Term Environmental Thought during the Middle Period

Nietzsche’s Long-Term Environmental Ethics to Promote Higher Culture during the Period of *Human, All Too Human*

The longest text in Nietzsche’s corpus is one of the most neglected, the two volume aphoristic manual for free spirits, *Human, All Too Human*. Here, Nietzsche’s ethics shift from the emphasis on nature-directed exemplars in the early philosophy to a long-term promotion of a distinctive higher culture, characterized and informed by axiological non-anthropocentrism. Nowhere in the text does Nietzsche explicitly formulate a foundational principle as he does in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. However, my account here explicates how the following principle characterizes Nietzsche’s foundational ethical conception:

*Act so as to promote higher culture for the long-term.*

Nietzsche’s ethical conception during this period consists of the following distinctive aspects (with primary passages utilized regarding the interpretation of these aspects):


3. Nietzsche advances a central axiological notion, i.e. “higher culture”, as that to be promoted. {I: 3, 25, 42-3, 245, 251, 261, 274-8, 281, 285, 292, 439, 465, 474, 477, 480-1, 520, 614; II: 180, 184; WS: 7, 37, 39, 87, 188-9}

4. Nietzsche’s conception of “higher culture” strongly suggests the inclusion of axiological non-anthropocentrism and definitely incorporates ethical non-anthropocentrism in that Nietzsche, throughout the book, extends moral considerability to sentient animals suggesting that their hedonic states and self-preservation are valuable for them independent of human concerns and interests, i.e. that this recognition of non-human sentient animals characterizes the members of a higher culture. {I: 31, 34, 40, 42-3, 81, 101-2, 111, 141, 144, 233; II: 185; WS: 12, 14, 57, 304, 350}

5. Though intimated in earlier parts of the book, Nietzsche fully articulates in “The Wanderer and His Shadow” a commitment to what Del Caro has termed the “revaluation of the quotidian.” For Nietzsche, this consists of a reorientation to how one views one’s environment. {I: 24, 70, 611; WS: 5-6, 16, 188, 310, 350}

6. Also intimated in earlier parts of the book but more articulately pronounced in “The Wanderer and His Shadow,” Nietzsche advances critiques of structural features of society not typically associated with his philosophy: the military-industrial complex {I: 481; WS: 279, 284}, technology {I: 585; WS: 220, 280, 288}, a market informed by preference satisfaction {WS: 280}, the exploitation of workers {WS: 286}, and extreme disparities in wealth {WS: 285, 293}. All of these to some extent involve some relationship to the natural environment, e.g. how a society appropriates and makes use of natural resources. Also, because concern for the environment is often
seen as closely tied with progressive social reforms, it is of special interest to discuss these rare instances in Nietzsche’s body of work where he expresses some common ground with the objectives of progressives.

*Human, All Too Human* launches a sustained critique of metaphysics and religion, particularly regarding metaphysical and religious justifications of value judgments and morality. Nietzsche, for instance, denies that human beings possess “freedom of will” that would sustain a robust conception of moral accountability.²⁵⁰ Nietzsche criticizes holding past individuals and cultures morally responsible as overlooking the state of cultural evolution obtained in their past.²⁵¹ Nietzsche also denies the reality of any eternal justice or a necessary connection between moral action and intellectual insight.²⁵² Nietzsche firmly rejects any appeals to supernaturalism and, anticipating his formulation of the “death of God” argues that belief in God has completely lost any tenability for the justification of values and moral judgments.²⁵³ Moreover, Nietzsche advances arguments on behalf of axiological and moral skepticism, once again, particularly concerning moral accountability and the ability to make impartial axiological and moral judgments.²⁵⁴ At times, in fact, the Nietzsche of *Human* looks very much like the popular caricature of him as a hopeless nihilist.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche advances axiological and ethical considerations throughout each volume of *Human*, and as I argue below, in such a way as to suggest a well-considered, robust, and more or less, unified theory. In fact, Nietzsche clearly draws attention to his responses to his

²⁵⁰ HAH I: 39
²⁵¹ HAH I: 42-3
²⁵² HAH I: 53
²⁵³ HAH I: 25, 245; II: 179
²⁵⁴ HAH I: 32-4
own skepticism\textsuperscript{255} and recognizes the inevitability of value-and-moral judgments.\textsuperscript{256} Much like
Hume, Nietzsche, given practical considerations, mitigates against his extreme skepticism
precisely because of the inevitability of those very considerations. In fact, the disciplines of
science and history, unlike metaphysics and religion, can inform constructed values and goals of
human endeavor.\textsuperscript{257} In volume I, at 24-5 and 245, Nietzsche claims that humanity must set a
goal for itself now that there is no longer a God to command human cultural aspirations and
moral dictates, and at 25 in particular emphasizes the role of creativity in this process. Created
or constructed goals, however, must be regulated by scientific standards and historical insight
concerning the vicissitudes of various cultures throughout the past of humanity. In fact,
practically bad outcomes and errors of reasoning should be avoided.\textsuperscript{258} Knowledge, then, should
be the decisive regulatory criterion in new axiological and ethical constructs.\textsuperscript{259} Nietzsche poses
the question, then, of what values and moral judgments would enhance life given the conditions
of the world and culture as revealed by science and history. Free spirits provide the creative
impetus by which to direct the scientific and learned for their regulatory role by creatively
advancing and positing aspirations and goals.\textsuperscript{260} The potentially unfolding social and reflective
process of value and ethical construction emerges only at an advanced stage of cultural evolution
and the evolutionary refinement of human cognitive faculties.\textsuperscript{261} At 95, Nietzsche indicates that
he also embraces at least one substantive theoretical and meta-practical commitment on the front
end of the process of construction, i.e. that normative commitments align as fully as possible
both the proliferation and unleashing of the creative and personal energies of the ego with the

\textsuperscript{255} HAH I: 25, 34, 107 245; II:179
\textsuperscript{256} HAH I: 31-4, 245
\textsuperscript{257} HAH I: 25, 245, 274, 292; II:179
\textsuperscript{258} HAH I: 292
\textsuperscript{259} HAH I: 24-5, 245, 292
\textsuperscript{260} HAH I: 281
\textsuperscript{261} HAH I: 24, 42-3, 94, 101, 245
well-being of others. In fact, Nietzsche, as in ancient conceptions of ethics, contends that we can only genuinely work for the good of others to the extent that we find our “highest advantage” in the work. Next, I discuss the most unique aspect of these constructs, i.e. they must be developed for the long-term.

Nietzsche first indicates his commitment to a long-term ethics by expressing concern over what the loss of a “metaphysical outlook” might entail for the prospects of long-term ethical thinking. Nietzsche indicates that such a metaphysical outlook—though he emphatically critiques metaphysics throughout the book—encourages people to think on a larger scale beyond the narrow confines of their own temporal place. Without the values often presupposed in metaphysical conceptions, Nietzsche worries that the focus will center only on one’s own prospects of happiness and contentment. He specifically gives the example of planting a tree that may last much longer than one’s own lifespan.262 Here Nietzsche certainly suggests the superiority of such an ethical outlook. In fact, Nietzsche indicates that the ability to think of the long-term consequences does not merely distinguish human beings from non-human animals263 but also is a product of cultural evolution.264 So even though moderns coping with the loss of grand meta-narratives of religious and metaphysical significance might opt to live only for the near-term and concentrate on merely the duration of their own lives at the expense of the future well-being of the earth, modernity with its progress in the natural and historical sciences and its firm recognition of the hollow appeals of supernaturalism, has an unique opportunity to do the opposite.

262 HAH I: 22
263 HAH I: 94
264 HAH I: 24
In fact, Nietzsche makes abundantly clear his commitment to a distinctive global ethic that encompasses the whole earth. Nietzsche calls for “managing the earth as a whole economically” indicating that he has more in mind than simply fiscal considerations, placing more emphasis on the advancement and maintenance of nutrition and education. Once again, specific practical conclusions need to be implemented and regulated with scientific standards, noting also that science often promotes the well-being of humanity. History, too, serves as a tool in long-term considerations. Nietzsche thinks long-term ethical thinking so important that, in conjunction with the observation that those who reproduce can more easily enter into this frame of mind, he prescribes letting only those who have children participate in public affairs.

Nietzsche’s defense of viewing the long-term impacts of present decisions as of top ethical priority is in part informed by his critique of Kantian deontology. Kant, according to Nietzsche, naively presupposes that every human being must act the same because each human being has the same moral status as a person. Nietzsche challenges the notion that Kantian moral theory particularly upholds human dignity in that it cannot practically guarantee the future benefits and cultural advancement of the human species as a whole. Considerations of the long-term might well justify different sets of obligations for different human types or groups because of their unique natural and social profiles. Nietzsche also appeals to considerations of the long-term to reject egalitarianism. Nietzsche warns that “conscious universal rule” which considers every human person an equal legislator leads to destruction. He seems to imply that such a basis

265 HAH I: 24-5, 245; WS: 189; Nietzsche often specifically employs the German term for earth, Erde.
266 HAH I: 24
267 HAH I: 25, 38, 245
268 HAH I: 292
269 HAH I: 455
270 HAH I: 25
271 Nietzsche states this too strongly. Kant leaves it up to moral agents to decide how they develop themselves and assist others. Thanks to J. Clerk Shaw, for reminding me of this aspect of Kant’s moral philosophy.
of authority leads to chaos and cultural bankruptcy unlike the adoption of long-term goals regulated by scientific standards. Nietzsche seems to imply that only serious consideration of the long-term can reconcile one to the tragedy that looms over any and every notion of moral and social progress, and evolution, i.e. that all progress and evolution inherently depends on exploitation, war, and “the violent and savage character of life.” These problematic aspects of existence are indispensable for the advancement and proliferation of new stages of evolution. Nietzsche rejects any firm bifurcation between opposites such as good and evil, or egoism and altruism. Rather, one “opposite” emerges out of the other, its very precondition for its development.

While Nietzsche does think that the problematic aspects of existence such as war are inevitable features of human life Nietzsche does argue that national and militaristic political strategies drain the future of intellectual, cultural, and creative energy. Furthermore, he also discusses both a historical pharmacology and a medicinal geography. The historical pharmacology involves using a knowledge of both a patient’s health and climatic conditions to recommend a suitable location for recovery either temporarily or permanently. The medical geography, then, supplies the principal background information regarding the climatic distribution of sickness, degeneration, and physical infirmity and so can aid in longer, larger scale projects of transplantation of populations. These concerns show that Nietzsche gives critical attention to the environment. They also show that, for Nietzsche, understanding the environment is indispensable to developing the best approach for bringing about optimal long-

272 Nietzsche, though often critical of crass capitalist based production and consumption, curiously does not mention this here, though he could have this kind of thing in mind.
273 HAH I: 234-5, 477, 520
274 HAH I: 1; WS: 67
275 HAH I: 480-1
276 WS: 188
term results in the ways in which humans inhabit the earth. I next discuss what kinds of axiological considerations Nietzsche advances for the long-term.

Nietzsche’s employment of long-term consequentialist reasoning is not advanced on behalf of the mere survival or hedonic states of human beings. Centrally, Nietzsche advances a conception of “higher culture” and indicates a qualification of the long-term application of this conception by raising critical considerations against both axiological and ethical anthropocentrism. I next consider Nietzsche’s central notion, i.e. “higher culture”, and then discuss how his discussion of animals and “nature” qualifies his conception.

Nietzsche introduces his conception of higher culture in his critique of metaphysics by contrasting it with lower culture. Whereas lower culture values errors developed by metaphysics and idealistic aesthetic considerations, i.e. “spinning out forms and symbols”, higher cultures build upon the values of “unpretentious truths” built up by rigorous and scientific thinking. Nietzsche indicates that higher culture is an ongoing, dynamic project that involves “knowledge of the preconditions of culture.” Knowledge of unpretentious truths, the products of the natural and historical sciences, are valued precisely for their regulatory role in the future construction of culture. Such a culture outgrows cruelty and evolves ever-developing standards of behavior and goods deemed desirable. Nietzsche characterizes higher culture by a distinctive cultural task. Higher culture is set up by both a power-source and a regulator. The passions at the heart of aesthetic interest and egoistic aspiration are regulated by the impartial perspective attending the determination of scientific fact.

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277 HAH I: 3
278 HAH I: 25
279 Nietzsche goes on to repeat many of the points in 25 at 245.
280 HAH I: 42-3, 614
281 HAH I: 251
Nietzsche suggests that participation in higher culture need not result in happiness, further distancing himself from hedonism and utilitarianism, though of course not from consequentialism. The promotion of higher culture prioritizes the development of human cognitive and creative capacities over and above the total state of pleasure or happiness in society. In fact, nothing admits of any higher normative ideal or justification than the “deeds of higher culture”, e.g. participation in the development of the arts and sciences over and above the then current social and political agendas of the socialists and nationalists, respectively.

Nietzsche does not then posit ethical goals in terms of any appeal to economic or political standards, but rather to cultural standards. Nietzsche also tends to associate the former with a thoughtless rat race and the latter with meaningful contemplation. As he distinctively explains in one passage, higher culture requires contemplation and gets obstructed by haste and thoughtless activity.

This axiological notion, i.e. the advancement of higher culture, strongly suggests an axiological anthropocentrism since Nietzsche focuses on a distinctive type of human culture and the proliferation of particular human capacities. Nietzsche, however, does not clearly embrace and affirm either axiological or ethical anthropocentrism but recognizes that evolved capacities involve also modified sensibilities and receptivity to the natural world, and in particular, sentient animals. In fact, Nietzsche indicates that axiological and ethical non-anthropocentrism characterize higher culture for two reasons. One, Nietzsche claims that participants in higher culture outgrow cruelty and this includes cruelty to animals. Nietzsche’s full elaboration of this claim indicates that the participants of higher culture extend moral considerability to animals.

282 HAH I: 277
283 HAH I: 480
284 HAH I: 285
Second, Nietzsche sees the development of a unique non-anthropocentric outlook as a part of cultural evolution and reinforced by the body of knowledge developed since the scientific revolution. The advancement of knowledge of the natural world through the sciences cuts away at the mistaken metaphysical assumptions underlying axiological anthropocentrism.

Nietzsche, in the following passage, suggests that sentient animals warrant moral consideration.

> The cruelty towards animals exhibited by children and Italians is attributable to a want of understanding; the animal, has, especially in the interest of ecclesiastical teaching, been placed too far below man.\(^{285}\)

The context provided in this passage, a discussion of cruelty, indicates that Nietzsche has here in mind not merely questions of value but that of ethical practice. As he did earlier in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche takes seriously the problem of animal suffering. Also, as he intimated in his earlier meditation, he here asserts that the more refined and evolved human beings become (“sorry Italians!”) the more they develop a tendency to refine their moral sentiments and outgrow cruelty.\(^{286}\) In these passages, however, Nietzsche warns against judging past epochs and the less refined with the standards of the more developed (“Don’t judge those merciless Italians too harshly, they don’t know any better!”), as if, in a somewhat similar manner, one morally judged predators like bears and tigers for disemboweling their prey alive as they eat them. Nietzsche recognizes the role of knowledge in social development and thinks that moral conceptions depend on the knowledge and capacities of moral agents. He even gives a specific analysis of this point regarding the development of moral judgments and practices in

\(^{285}\) HAH I: 101  
\(^{286}\) HAH I: 42-3
humanity’s traffic with animals in volume two.\textsuperscript{287} Moral conceptions develop from considerations of utility and harm to human communities. Animals that pose threats are killed with impunity and other animals domesticated for the use of the community. Acts of human kindness to small creatures, he claims, is often “clumsy” and “murderous.” (Unfortunately, Nietzsche does not give an example of precisely what he has in mind.) As the sense of utility develops, however, human beings develop prudential concerns for domesticated animals, especially those purchased from other owners. Nietzsche goes on next to describe what seems like the Kantian position regarding the treatment of animals. Prudential concerns eventually transform into prohibitions against animal cruelty because it raises concerns over how someone might treat a weaker or subordinate person. Finally, in rare particular cases, human beings may come to view certain animals with “reverential awe” and many religions may develop positive conceptions of the status of certain animals. So, despite the peculiarities in his observation of Italian morals, Nietzsche certainly thinks with good reason that the evolution of moral sentiments in the further development of human cognitive and affective capacities explains a newly evolved awareness and sensibility to animal suffering. Nietzsche then indicates that those who develop these capacities extend moral consideration to animals.

The quoted passage from above also goes on to suggest the negative role of certain types of religion (especially Christianity) in moral attitudes and evaluations of non-human animals and other natural phenomena. Nietzsche makes it clear that he aims to reevaluate these tendencies. In the 3\textsuperscript{rd} section of volume one, “The Religious Life,” Nietzsche characterizes the very collective historical meaning of every religious cult as defined by axiological and metaphysical anthropocentrism.

\textsuperscript{287} WS: 57
The meaning of the religious cult is to determine and constrain nature for the benefit of mankind, that is to say *to impress upon it a regularity and rule of law which it does not at first possess*;\(^{288}\)

Later in the section, he accuses the religious phenomenon known as asceticism of devaluing nature, and even goes so far as to suggest that ascetic practices developed with more success after the decline of the Roman period from the then rampant desensitization to the sufferings of animals and participants in the gladiatorial contests.\(^{289}\) Later in volume two, Nietzsche charges Christianity as “barren and regressive” concerning its views on animals.\(^{290}\)

Nietzsche also shows concern over the tendency in metaphysics and morality to denigrate the value and significance of nature because it fails to live up to standards of human moral perfection. Moral conceptions tend to throw nature in a negative light because of the destructiveness and capriciousness found in non-human natural phenomena, i.e. their senselessness, violence, etc.\(^{291}\) His critique of metaphysical idealisms aims to “recover nature.”\(^ {292}\) This recovery involves a newfound sense of innocence that knowledge casts over natural phenomena.\(^ {293}\) Moral progress has tended to involve the suppression of human animality and this explains why certain moralists evince only disdain for non-human animals.\(^ {294}\) Nietzsche even argues for a close link between an eager adherence to a doctrine of free will and axiological anthropocentrism.

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\(^{288}\) HAH I: 111  
\(^{289}\) HAH I: 141  
\(^{290}\) WS: 57  
\(^{291}\) HAH I: 233  
\(^{292}\) HAH I: 31  
\(^{293}\) HAH I: 34  
\(^{294}\) HAH I: 40
Without the errors which are active in every psychical pleasure and displeasure a humanity would never have come into existence---- whose fundamental feeling is and remains that man is the free being in a world of unfreedom, the eternal *miracle worker* whether he does good or ill, the astonishing exception, the superbeast and almost-god, the meaning of creation which cannot be thought away, the solution of the cosmic riddle, the mighty ruler over nature and the despiser of it, the creature which calls its history *world history!* – *Vanitas vanitatum homo* (man is the vanity of vanities).  

Nietzsche, later in the second volume, explains how pervasive and latent he finds this “vanity” of axiological anthropocentrism.

*Man! –* What is the vanity of the vainest man compared with the vanity which the most modest possesses when, in the midst of nature and the world, he feels himself to be ‘man!’  

The growth of scientific knowledge supports this challenge against axiological anthropocentrism (as customarily justified by an idealist metaphysics characterized by metaphysical anthropocentrism and subject to self-deceptive interpretations justifying our uniqueness).

Yet even here, where we are for once willing to see our humanity humiliated, our vanity is playing a trick on us, inasmuch as we men would like to be something incomparable and miraculous at least in *possessing* this vanity. Our uniqueness in the universe! alas, it is all too improbable an idea! The astronomers, to whom there is sometimes given a horizon that really is free of earth, give us to

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295 WS: 12  
296 WS: 304
understand that the drop of life in the universe is without significance for the total character of the tremendous ocean of becoming and passing away: that uncounted stars possess similar conditions for the production of life as the earth does--- very many thus do, though they constitute only a handful compared with the limitless number which have never experienced the eruption of life or long since have recovered from it; that measured against the duration of their existence life on each of these stars has been a moment, a sudden flickering up, with long, long spaces of time afterwards--- and thus in no sense the goal and ultimate objective of their existence. Perhaps the ant in the forest imagines it is the goal and objective of the forest just as we do when in our imagination we almost involuntarily associate the destruction of mankind with the destruction of the earth: indeed, we are being modest if we halt at that and do not organize a general twilight of the gods and the universe for the funeral rites of the last man. Even the most unprejudiced astronomer himself can hardly imagine the earth without life other than as the luminous and floating grave-mound of mankind.297

Nietzsche appears to indicate here a close link between metaphysical views that subscribe to some over-arching natural teleology and axiological anthropocentrism. Since the current body of scientific knowledge gives little evidence to support any such teleology (in fact, it proffers none and so counts as evidence against such views), Nietzsche implies that one has reasons for discounting metaphysical anthropocentrism, which in turn justifies axiological anthropocentrism. Finally, Nietzsche thinks that one of the great advancements of the 19th century, i.e. historical

297 WS: 14
knowledge, provides evidence for recognizing the breakdown of certain value-laden metaphysical dichotomies concerning human beings and the natural world, including animals.

…then in the striving for knowledge of the entire historical past— which ever more mightily distinguishes the modern age from all others and has for the first time demolished the ancient walls between nature and spirit, man and animal, morality and the physical world—\(^\text{298}\)

The evidence above suggests that Nietzsche advances axiological and ethical non-anthropocentric considerations. Not only does the long-term consequentialism call for the perfecting of human culture, it also calls for a revaluation of how that human culture relates to the natural world. In particular, the evolved cultures of the future outgrow animal cruelty and don’t falsely view their culture as the one central and fundamental meaning and value of the earth.

“The Wanderer and His Shadow” completes the two volume set of arguments and observations that comprise *Human, All Too Human*. Here Nietzsche develops his environmental philosophy in two more specific directions, i.e. what Del Caro views as a revaluation of the quotidian and Nietzsche’s structural critique of modern societies. The revaluation of the quotidian focuses on how one situates one’s life within one’s environment. In fact, Nietzsche appears to highlight the centrality of this topic, and appears to approach it from both an ethical and an aesthetic perspective.

The revaluation of the quotidian certainly begins in the first volume\(^\text{299}\) but becomes more pronounced in “The Wanderer and His Shadow.” Nietzsche gives several examples of what he

\(^{298}\) HAH II: 185  
\(^{299}\) HAH I: 24, 70, 611
finds included in his conception of the quotidian: eating, housing, clothing, social intercourse, division of the day, profession, leisure, feeling for art and nature, and sleeping. Nietzsche argues that the neglect of the quotidian leads to “physical and psychical frailties.” What makes his position distinct, however, involves the following three claims.

1. Despite appearances to the contrary modern society does, in fact, neglect the quotidian.

2. It neglects the quotidian because it doesn’t yet possess enough of a discriminating taste, partially informed by science, history, and geography, with respect to the quotidian.

3. Idealist metaphysics infiltrating every aspect of modern society obscures the significance and real value of the quotidian.

Modern society inherits overblown questions from previously governing religious and metaphysical conceptions concerning the ultimate task and purpose of humanity in the universe, or concern over the salvation of the soul, or viewing one’s moral dignity as consisting in precisely that which separates an individual from his or her environmental surroundings, e.g. her “freedom of will.” These religious and metaphysical interpretations devalue the significance of questions concerning one’s personal hygiene and sense of activity from day to day. Why bother with taking care of your body when you’ll get a new one in heaven? Why bother administering the resources of the earth if it might not be around much longer because of an impending apocalypse? That which comprises the quotidian might receive significant attention from

300 WS: 5-6
301 WS: 6
302 WS: 5-6, 16
303 WS: 16, 188
304 WS: 5-6, 16
religious adherents but not with the same kind of motivating force and pull as do questions of salvation, ultimate purpose, or the metaphysical status of what it means to be human. For Nietzsche, then, the critique of metaphysics and religion goes hand in hand with the revaluation of the quotidian. Science, broadly conceived to include the social sciences, on the other hand, can not only demonstrate the importance of the quotidian but it can assist in developing discriminations tailored to different groups and individuals (see again the above points concerning the historical pharmacology and the medicinal geography). Nietzsche, late in his project, formulates the following two principles concerning the relation of knowledge to the quotidian (in earlier passages Nietzsche refers to quotidian concerns as “the closest”).

**First principle:** life should be ordered on the basis of what is most certain and most demonstrable, not as hitherto on that of what is most remote, indefinite and no more than a cloud on the horizon. **Second Principle:** the order of succession of what is closest and most immediate, less close and less immediate, certain and less certain, should be firmly established before one orders one’s life and gives it a definitive direction.  

Nietzsche here gives two practical principles by which to conduct the revaluation of the quotidian. First, begin with concerns over that which one has little doubt, and then prioritize based on that which exerts the most influence upon one’s daily life. For instance, one might begin to order a life based on location instead of career, or see to it that certain daily regimens receive more importance in one’s schedule than participation in events of more social prominence. Certainly, this involves a considerable degree of experimentation. Nietzsche then argues that an inverse relationship tends to obtain between different lifestyles based on how the

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305 WS: 310
lifestyle reflects the importance of quotidian affairs in proportion to the degree that one adopts that lifestyle against the backdrop of either a religious or metaphysical conception of the world as opposed to that of a scientific conception of the world. Nietzsche though goes on to suggest that old habits die hard, and that moderns still latently internalize past tendencies inherited from previous worldviews. In this regard, Nietzsche finds the overblown conception of the importance of the state and its seductive appeal to those jettisoning the religious life as a particularly prominent example of an institution beset with rationalizations and justifications masking latent tendencies of neglect of what really matters in everyday life.\footnote{HAH I: 472} Nietzsche, though, extends his critique to the market, industrialization, labor, and the modern emphasis on the necessity of a strong military and to these I now turn my attention.

First, Nietzsche criticizes what is commonly referred to as “the military-industrial complex.” Nietzsche argues that a nation that overemphasizes the significance of its military strength and engages in wars does so at the expense of its “spiritual” energy and ability for individuals to culturally evolve. He first notes the cost to the professions and the energy removed from daily and domestic affairs.

Just as the greatest cost to a people involved in war and preparation for war is not the expense of the war or the interruption to trade and commerce, nor the maintenance of standing armies--- however great these expenses may be now that eight states of Europe expend between two and three milliards annually on it--- but the cost involved in the removal year in, year out of an extraordinary number of its efficient and industrious men from their proper professions and occupations so that they may become soldiers: so a people which sets about practicing grand
politics and ensuring to itself a decisive voice among the most powerful states does not incur the highest costs where these are usually thought to lie.\textsuperscript{307}

Nietzsche goes on to insinuate that political power and culture tend to develop in inverse proportion to each other especially in his assertion that “the sum total of all these sacrifices and costs in individual energy and work is so tremendous that the political emergence of a people almost necessarily draws after it a spiritual impoverishment and enfeeblement and a diminution of the capacity for undertakings demanding great concentration and application.” Nietzsche finishes the passage by asking whether or not the display of military power (only to ensure more “favorable terms for trade and travel extorted” from other states) is “worth” the sacrifice of the cultural evolution of its best and brightest. In the “The Wanderer and His Shadow” Nietzsche captures this trend even more beautifully and succinctly in an aphorism he entitles “\textit{A brake on culture}.”\textsuperscript{308} He first describes a picture of uniformity, the cheapness of human life, and a society which has no time for “productive occupations” because of its attention to “weapon-practice and parades.” He then clearly indicates how this picture fleshes out his earlier conception on the relation between power politics and culture and that “what has been described is our modern military machine” which serves as a “brake” on culture. He does concede that sometimes culture needs a “brake”, perhaps referring to his earlier acknowledgement that the nature of evolving life, even more developed forms of life, require the seedy underbelly of all kinds of wars, violence, etc.\textsuperscript{309} Nietzsche a few aphorisms later though argues against the rhetoric of “self-defense” utilized by modern states against one another and calls for a rapid disarmament,

\textsuperscript{307} HAH I: 481
\textsuperscript{308} WS: 279
\textsuperscript{309} See footnote 273.
especially from those “best armed.” He describes first the series of hypocritical public rationalizations involved in “defense” rhetoric. He then gives his argument as follows.

This is how all states now confront one another: they presuppose an evil disposition in their neighbor and a benevolent disposition in themselves. This presupposition, however, is a piece of inhumanity as bad as, if not worse than, a war would be; indeed, fundamentally it already constitutes an invitation to and cause of wars, because, as aforesaid, it imputes immorality to one’s neighbor and thereby seems to provoke hostility and hostile acts on his part. The doctrine of the army as a means of self-defense must be renounced just as completely as the thirst for conquest. And perhaps there will come a great day on which a nation distinguished for wars and victories and for the highest development of military discipline and thinking, and accustomed to making the heaviest sacrifices on behalf of these things, will cry of its own free will: ‘we shall shatter the sword’ – and demolish its entire military machine down to its last foundations.310

His commendation of disarmament does not actually climax where I truncate the above quote. He describes it further and finds it the “means to real peace” and even develops a future maxim for the individual state: “Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twofold better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared.” However, Nietzsche then shifts at the end of the passage to cynically criticize “liberal representatives” for failing to understand human nature and why schemes of gradual disarmament will not work. Nietzsche implies that only a fundamental change in a society’s self-conception can eventually lead to the immediate disarmament that he calls for right before his cynical observations. Nietzsche, then, develops critiques against the

310 WS: 284
self-justificatory rhetoric involved in the legitimation of military power. His critique also reveals his long-term concerns for the promotion of enhanced human culture.

For Nietzsche, once again, the enhancement of human culture involves the development and refinement of uniquely evolved capacities, not a systemic streamline of industrialization and the instrumental processes involved in modern societies. Nietzsche first develops critical questions concerning technology in the first volume of *Human.*\(^{311}\) He wonders whether or not markets that coalesce around the maintenance of machines do not end up reversing the logic behind their initial construction and implementation, i.e. the maintenance of machines might itself become an end so pervasive that many human individuals can only manage to be useful in their role maintaining the machines. Nietzsche specifically develops this very criticism in “The Wanderer and His Shadow,”\(^{312}\) particularly in the direction of his concern for cultural evolution. He acknowledges that the machine is “a product of the highest intellectual energies” and that its implementation “releases a vast quantity of energy in general that would otherwise lie dormant,” but that it leads to uniformity and a longing for idleness, suppressing the enhancement of our creative capacities. He develops this criticism further in a later aphorism entitled “To what extent the machine abases us.”\(^{313}\) Nietzsche indicates here that the machine depersonalizes both the worker and the product of the work and that “we must not purchase the alleviation of work at too high a price.” The criticism that Nietzsche advances here works in concert with his critiques of a preference-satisfaction market and the modern system of labor. Nietzsche, though not aware of some of the specific long-term negative consequences to the earth from industrialization such as global warming, already finds the logic behind its advancement perverse and unconvincing.

\(^{311}\) HAH I: 585
\(^{312}\) WS: 220
\(^{313}\) WS: 288
Given his constant refrains concerning nature, the earth, life, and animals, conjoined with his
denunciation of the depersonalizing and dulling structural features of modern society, Nietzsche
indicates that the cultural vision animating his long-term consequentialism involves a much more
creative and “green” relationship to the earth and its plethora of energies.

Nietzsche also criticizes that which particularly motivates the advancement of
industrialization, i.e. a preference-satisfaction market. Nietzsche first claims that the then
present market utilizes the public as the primary judge concerning sold products who lack
“specialist knowledge” concerning the quality of these products. Consequently, the market will
develop products suitable to the “taste” of the public while the actual quality of products declines
in an inverse proportion. Nietzsche reminds buyers that they only get what they pay for when
they buy products with ever cheapening prices. Nietzsche calls for the reversal of this market
process.

Only the skilled producer of the product ought to be the judge of the product, and
the public ought to rely on their faith in him and his integrity. Therefore, no
anonymous work! At the very least a knowledgeable expert in the product would
have to be on hand as guarantor and place his name upon it if the name of its
originator was unavailable or without significance.314

Nietzsche then at the end of the passage calls for “more respect for those who know!” repeating
the title of the aphorism. Nietzsche’s argument for “skilled” producers and his placing an
emphasis on the necessity of an “expert” performing the function of “guarantor” amounts to
pushing for the professionalization of business. Professionals in medicine, law, and teaching,

314 WS: 280
etc. require extensive training of an intellectual nature and perform some important service to society.\textsuperscript{315} Nietzsche’s critique of a market dictated by the satisfaction of uninformed consumer preferences and his commitment to the development of market-independent standards of expertise in production implies that those who engage in “business” do not take up an activity meaningfully different from that of the traditional standard-driven professions mentioned above.

Nietzsche also criticizes the modern system of labor advanced by industrialization. In an aphorism entitled “The value of work”\textsuperscript{316} Nietzsche unequivocally censures the exploitation of the worker, once again on the grounds of his long-term consequentialist views.

The exploitation of the worker was, it has now been realized, a piece of stupidity, an exhausting of the soil at the expense of the future, an imperiling of society. Now we already have almost a state of war: and the cost of keeping the peace, of concluding treaties and acquiring trust, will henceforth in any event be very great, because the folly of the exploiters was very great and of long duration.\textsuperscript{316}

In just the aphorism before conjoined with a later aphorism on democracy, Nietzsche also voices criticism against extreme disparities in wealth, once again on consequentialist grounds.

If property is henceforth to inspire more confidence and become more moral, we must keep open all the paths to the accumulation of moderate wealth through work, but prevent the sudden or unearned acquisition of riches; we must remove from the hands of private individuals and companies all those branches of trade and transportation favorable to the accumulation of great wealth, thus especially

\textsuperscript{315} Ethics Across the Professions: A Reader for Professional Ethics, 9
\textsuperscript{316} WS: 286
the trade in money--- and regard those who possess too much as being as great a danger to society as those who possess nothing.\textsuperscript{317}

The later aphorism on democracy argues that a democracy yet to come must rather undemocratically find a way for the extremely indigent and those extremely wealthy to somehow not vote, since extreme inequalities in wealth combined with party sectarianism more than anything else undermines democracy.\textsuperscript{318} (Nietzsche criticizes what in his day calls itself democracy as not yet manifesting real democracy and in no way differing substantially from older forms of government.) Nietzsche, then, in the middle period, finds some common enemies with democracy, e.g. extreme disparities in wealth and the exploitation of workers, in the advancement of his own long-term vision of higher culture’s inhabitation of a deindustrialized, demilitarized planet.

Nietzsche critiques the structural features of modern society because they cost the human species its own enhanced cultural development. Nietzsche calls for his readers to rethink their daily lives, particularly their quotidian relationship with their natural surroundings. Nietzsche recognizes other values in these natural surroundings and qualifies his axiological conception because of non-human animals. Nietzsche also shows concern over how metaphysics and religion affect our conception of the natural world, even the inhabiting of the earth itself. Nietzsche advances a conception of value that emphasizes that which is truly distinctive of a species, in the case of human beings, the refinement of their cognitive and creative capacities. Nietzsche thinks that the long-term consequences bearing on these developments are the decisive feature of ethical concern. Finally, this ethical concern itself evolves out of and beyond the

\textsuperscript{317} WS: 285
\textsuperscript{318} WS: 293
growing recognition of the prevalent falsity of all previous moral systems built upon suspect religious and metaphysical assumptions.

*Daybreak*

I first argue that *Daybreak* does not represent any major substantive departure from the positive ethical vision as presented in *Human, All Too Human*. Next, however, I emphasize the distinctiveness of the book. I contend that in *Daybreak* Nietzsche makes explicit and gives sustained treatment to both a descriptive theory of morality and his metaethical critique against the underpinning assumptions of nearly every previous moral system, which he began and intimated in *Human*. These aspects begin his “campaign against morality” and so warrant attention given my attribution to Nietzsche of a positive ethical position. With the descriptive theory and the critique of morality laid out more clearly, I argue that these criticisms do not rule out the endorsement of the positive ethical vision. I begin with the continuation from *Human* of that vision.

First, Nietzsche clearly retains his metaethically constructivist justification for a long-term consequentialism as begun in *Human*. I first look at his justificatory orientation and then at his retention of focus on the long-term. At 106, Nietzsche advances a series of questions that need to be asked regarding the future of ethical action, and then in the next aphorism, 107, advocates for treating these questions with impartiality, and so immune from the prejudices of morality.

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319 EH: “Why I Write such Good Books,” “Daybreak,” 1
Have we not been brought up to feel pathetically and to flee into the dark precisely when reason ought to be taking as clear and cold a view as possible!

That is to say, in the case of all our higher and weightier affairs.\textsuperscript{320}

Then, in 108, Nietzsche advances several theses that implement this justificatory orientation. He claims that previous moral conceptions do not adequately produce individual happiness, fail to define clearly “the happiness and welfare of mankind,” and erroneously see the evolution of reason and happiness both necessarily connected with morality. Most importantly, when faced with all moral systems, it becomes clear that humanity lacks “a universally recognized goal.” Nietzsche, then, calls for the development of a recommended goal that human beings might adopt. Later in the book Nietzsche calls for investigation and experimentation for the development of future practical activity.\textsuperscript{321} There he describes the “moral interregnum” of the present context, which no longer can endorse previous moral and ethical systems rendered epistemically suspect and obsolete by the advancement of scientific knowledge. The then present state of knowledge also is not yet sufficiently informed by scientific progress to develop a new morality.

Next, Nietzsche indicates that he retains a long-term viewpoint informed by consequentialist considerations.\textsuperscript{322} Nietzsche encourages long-term thinking about the future of morality and practical activity, and that human beings fail to consider the future of the species. Nietzsche advances questions from a long-term viewpoint that calls into question typical moral attitudes towards causing others to suffer.

\textsuperscript{320} D: 107
\textsuperscript{321} D: 432, 453
\textsuperscript{322} D: 106-8, 146, 339, 422, 552
What? Is the nature of the truly moral to lie in our keeping in view the most immediate and most direct consequences to others of our actions and deciding in accordance with these consequences? But this, though it may be a morality, is a narrow and petty bourgeois one: a higher and freer viewpoint, it seems to me, is to look beyond these immediate consequences to others and under certain circumstances to pursue more distant goals even at the cost of the suffering of others--- for example, to pursue knowledge even though one realizes that our free-spiritedness will at first and as an immediate consequence plunge others into doubt, grief and even worse things. May we not at least treat our neighbor as we treat ourselves? And if with regard to ourselves we take no such petty and bourgeois thought for the immediate consequences and the suffering they may cause, why do we have to take such thought in regard to our neighbor?323

Nietzsche goes on to discuss the enhancement of “the general feeling of human power” that might stem from the implementation of such long-term perspectives. For Nietzsche this enhancement amounts to the attainment of health and happiness, and the proliferation and advancement of distinctive human capacities (i.e. cognitive and creative capacities as discussed in Human).

Though not explicitly commenting on “higher culture” as he did in Human, Nietzsche certainly maintains his commitment to the further development of these distinctively human capacities.324 Nietzsche clearly does not think modernity represents the terminus of human

323 D: 146
324 The following passages supply indirect evidence of the continuity of this theme from Human: D 27, 106-8, 146, 168, 356, 422, 429, 432, 440, 453, 552 and 553.
development. He calls for poets to creatively explore possible future virtues of the human species.

Oh if the poets would only be again what they were once supposed to have been: --- seers who tell us something of the possible! Now that actuality and the past are and have to be taken more and more out of their hands – for the age of harmless false-coinage is at an end! If only they would let us feel in advance something of the virtues of the future! Or of virtues that will never exist on earth, though they could exist somewhere in the universe – of purple-glowing galaxies and whole Milky Ways of beauty! Astronomers of the ideal, where are you?325

Nietzsche seems to call here for the development of a science fiction poetry that might awaken a new sense of human capabilities. Given his sustained commitment to the development of knowledge in the middle period, and its reconciliation with artistic and creative energies, these future virtues may no doubt express the perfecting of these pursuits and their relationship to one another.

Nietzsche, once again, also indicates his departure from axiological and ethical anthropocentrism.326 Nietzsche claims that the deprecation of the body and the earth stems from the metaphysical emphasis on a “pure spirituality.”327 Nietzsche then critiques “the feeling of the grandeur of man” at 49, claiming that the development of the theory of evolution chips away at this anthropocentric overestimation of humanity, and that no matter how much the human species evolves it can never evolve into what metaphysicians of morality view as a “a higher

325 D: 551
326 The following passages indirectly support this assertion taken together with those discussed in the paragraph that follows: D 13, 17, 26-7, 31, 33, 50, 77, and 369.
327 D: 39
order.”328 Nietzsche again echoes his view from *Human* that the concept of God and sin perpetuate a logic of world denigration, because these concepts ultimately entail that the natural world and body not only possess less value and significance than a “true” metaphysical world, and the soul, but also might reek of imperfection and evil.329 He also strongly suggests a perspective beyond speciesism, and clearly invites the reader to reflect upon the perspectives of animals.

‘*Humanity*. --- We do not regard the animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings? -- An animal which could speak said: ‘Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free.’330

Two aphorisms back to back, 424-5, indicate that Nietzsche views metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism as closely connected. At 424 Nietzsche suggests that up to the present, human beings typically value knowledge only insofar as it reinforces the underlying metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism of human thought.

For to determine that a plant makes no contribution to the treatment of sick human beings is no argument against the *truth* of the plant. In earlier times, however, the conviction that mankind was the goal of nature was so strong that it was assumed without question that nothing could be disclosed by knowledge that was not salutary and useful to man, indeed that things other than this *could* not, *ought* not to *exist*.331

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328 D: 49 This passage also serves as good evidence that Nietzsche does not associate his emphasis on the future of higher culture with the development of a new humanoid species.
329 D: 94
330 D: 333
331 D: 424
He then goes on in 425 to claim that these metaphysical and axiological mistakes are intimately connected with the development of morality and that though this has contributed to the development of the cultural evolution of the human species that this has cost an immense amount of suffering. Here Nietzsche poignantly captures one of the tremendous ironies of this development.

Men have become *suffering* creatures as a consequence of their moralities: what they have purchased with them is, all in all, a feeling that at bottom they are too good and too significant for the earth and paying it only a passing visit.332

Nietzsche also indicates that various forms of anthropocentrism hinder the development of knowledge. Aphorism 483 suggests Nietzsche’s awareness of the problem of epistemological anthropocentrism and then at 547 Nietzsche blames metaphysical anthropocentrism (no doubt as the product of believing in divine providence) for hindering the development of scientific knowledge because such a belief encouraged excessive optimism that knowledge could be attained in a single human lifespan.

The march of science is now no longer crossed by the accidental fact that men live for about seventy years, as was for all too long the case. Formerly, a man wanted to reach the far end of knowledge during this period of time and the methods of acquiring knowledge were evaluated in accordance with this universal longing. The small single questions and experiments were counted contemptible: one wanted the shortest route; one believed that, because everything in the world

332 D: 425
seemed to be *accommodated to man*, the knowability of things was also accommodated to a human time-span.\(^{333}\)

Finally, near the end of the book Nietzsche beautifully describes his profound and personal experiences of the natural world. The passage thoughtfully invites consideration of animal perspectives.

In the meantime I have come to look with new eyes on the secret and solitary fleeting of a butterfly high on the rocky seacoast where many fine plants are growing: it flies about unconcerned but it has but *one* day more to live and that the night will be too cold for its winged fragility. For it too a philosophy could no doubt be found: though it would no doubt not be mine.\(^{334}\)

This passage nicely captures a neglected aspect of Nietzsche’s thought, i.e. a deeply thoughtful, even gentle, appreciation for fragile living creatures. Nietzsche also reveals here his concern for small details. This attention to detail not only characterizes his non-anthropocentric meditations on life but also his reconsideration of the “minutia” of one’s daily affairs.

Nietzsche, then, again, advances several considerations that revalue the significance and import of the quotidian. Nietzsche, for example, makes an analogy between liquor and “spiritual fire-water” (presumably the usual retinue of critiqued metaphysical and religious notions that minimize quotidian experience by comparison) that produces intoxication and dissatisfaction with one’s environment.\(^{335}\) Then in conjoined aphorisms 202 and 203, Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of attending to environmental factors that condition one’s physical and mental health,

\(^{333}\) D: 547  
\(^{334}\) D: 553  
\(^{335}\) D: 50
here expanded to include the social environment and its beliefs and attitudes about punishment, or the effect of maintaining one’s appearance as belonging to a certain class or income bracket on one’s dietary practices in social engagements. Nietzsche gives a clearer statement of the underlying rationale to these observations later in the book.

The mood in which we usually exist depends upon the mood in which we maintain our environment.\textsuperscript{336}

In a later passage he advocates giving more thought to one’s environment, and indicates that one’s choice regarding the environment in which he or she lives amounts to one of the most significant choices shaping the rest of one’s life.\textsuperscript{337} Nietzsche just a few passages later offers a profound psychological insight of how certain psychological conditions reinforce not only inattentiveness to one’s environment but its denigration including the attitudes and behaviors towards those \textit{perceived} as inferior.

There are proud fellows who, to produce in themselves a feeling of dignity and importance, always require others whom they can dominate and rape: others, that is to say, whose impotence and cowardice permits with impunity a display of anger and haughtiness in their presence! ---so that they require their environment to be wretched in order to raise themselves for a moment above their own wretchedness! --- To this end, one person has need of a dog, a second a friend, a third a wife, a fourth a party, and very rare type a whole era.\textsuperscript{338}

\textsuperscript{336} D: 283  
\textsuperscript{337} D: 364 Both in the passage cited here, and the quoted passage cited in the note just above, Hollingdale translates \textit{Umgebung} as “environment.”  
\textsuperscript{338} D 369 The passage also reinforces the idea that Nietzsche conceives of power as very different from its caricatured versions as political or as wielding violence, though these, for Nietzsche, certainly can count as expressions of power in some cases, but impotence in others.
Nowhere does Nietzsche offer a more precise restatement of his views concerning the revaluation of the quotidian in Human than in the following passage.

Our greatness and efficiency crumbles away not all at once but continually; the little plants which grow up in and around everything and know how to cling everywhere, it is these which ruin that which is great in us --- the everyday, hourly pitiableness of our environment which we constantly overlook, the thousand tendrils of this or that little, fainthearted sensation which grows out of our neighborhood, out of our job, our social life, out of the way we divide up the day. 339

Nietzsche ironically uses the metaphor of a plant (perhaps an invasive species) that chokes out the nutriments and resources needed for flourishing. Nietzsche echoes this point again at 462 in regards to one’s physical practices for one’s body. Finally, near the conclusion of the book, at 566, Nietzsche advises living frugally, and that the life of the thinker encourages this practice.

Also, in one of the longest aphorisms of the text, 206, Nietzsche echoes his macro-structural critique of modern society from the Human period in his discussion of the exploited workers of Europe. Nietzsche also here notes a significant environmental problem facing Europe: over-population. Nietzsche begins the passage by noting that both the “independent” and “slaves” can achieve happiness in their poverty. Nietzsche then once again complains about the devaluation of human capacities involved in the increasing dependence on technology and the rat race involved in modern economies.

339 D: 435
--- and I can think of no better news I could give to our factory slaves: provided, that is, they do not feel it to be in general a disgrace to be thus used, and used up, as a part of a machine and as it were stopgap to fill a hole in human inventiveness! To the devil with the belief that higher payment could lift from them the essence of their miserable condition --- I mean their impersonal enslavement! To the devil with the idea of being persuaded that an enhancement of this impersonality within the mechanical operation of a new society could transform the disgrace of slavery into a virtue! To the devil with setting a price on oneself in exchange for which one ceases to be a person and becomes part of a machine! Are you accomplices in the current folly of the nations --- the folly of wanting above all to produce as much as possible and to become as rich as possible? What you ought to do, rather, is to hold up to them the counter-reckoning: how great a sum of inner value is thrown away in pursuit of this external goal! But where is your inner value if you no longer know what it is to breathe freely?340

Nietzsche continues his line of questioning, asking about the considerations of personal quotidian matters (e.g. the influence of profession and marriage) for the contemplative types. Finally, his questions climax in questioning the socialist solution to the problems facing workers. The passage then shifts to Nietzsche advancing his own solution: emigration.

This would be the right attitude of mind: the workers of Europe ought henceforth to declare themselves as a class a human impossibility and not, as usually happens, only a somewhat harsh and inappropriate social arrangement; they ought

340 D: 206
to inaugurate within the European beehive an age of a great swarming-out such as has never been seen before, and through this act of free emigration in the grand manner to protest against the machine, against capital, and against the choice now threatening them of being compelled to become either the slave of the state or the slave of a party of disruption.341

Nietzsche then indicates the social upshot of his solution with a metaphor that reflects his typical frame of mind.

Thus a cleaner air would at last waft over old, over-populated and self-absorbed Europe!342

Nietzsche recognizes that this would deplete the workforce but counsels that compulsive needs develop over time from the too easy satisfaction of so-called needs. This echoes again his revaluation of quotidian lifestyles.

I have shown evidence that Nietzsche retains all the key pieces of his positive ethics inaugurated in Human, All Too Human, i.e. a constructivist justificatory strategy, long-term consequentialism, emphasis on higher culture qualified by axiological non-anthropocentrism, the revaluation of the quotidian, and a critique of the modern social structure. Nonetheless, the book differs from Human in terms of its points of emphasis and overall objective. Nietzsche here raises many more critical questions concerning morality as he expands on the pejorative social and psychological aspects involved in morality. He clarifies in what sense he denies morality, i.e. that moral judgments are truths. He also expands his metaethical critique of morality

341 D: 206
342 D: 206 “Cleaner air” here is used as a metaphor, but one that reflects Nietzsche’s typical valuing of optimal environmental conditions.
especially regarding the role of science. I next discuss how Nietzsche clarifies his critique of morality in *Daybreak*. Then, I discuss the expansion of his critique, giving due notice to passages that juxtapose morality with science. Finally, I discuss how his descriptive account of morality works in concert with this metaethical critique in that together they call for a reevaluation of the governing socialization systems of modernity.

Nietzsche distinguishes two ways of “denying” morality. First, a philosopher might claim that people do not act from moral motives as they claim but only out of self-interest, as held by the French essayist La Rochefoucauld. Second, a philosopher might deny that moral judgments are truths. Nietzsche explicitly states that he does not deny morality in the first sense but in the second, though he does admit that in very many cases people do not actually act from moral motives.

Thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their premises: but I do not deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these premises and acted in accordance with them.343

His analogical comparison of morality to alchemy also helps explain why Nietzsche denies moral premises. He views moral claims as not scientific and lacking epistemic justification. In fact, the more explicit comparison of science and morality marks one way in which Nietzsche expands upon his metaethical critique begun in *Human*.

For Nietzsche, the expansion of scientific knowledge erodes justification in the foundational assumptions of morality. In fact, many of the opening aphorisms of the book suggest this theme.344 Nietzsche makes the theme explicit in aphorisms 10 and 11.

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343 D: 103
344 D: 4-8 offer subtle suggestions about the implications of a scientific view of the world.
strongly rejects that moral judgments in both “material and form” meet basic epistemic standards, more or less equated with scientific standards. Nietzsche claims that as insights into the causal structures of phenomena increase so do false moral notions diminish and that morality and its theories count as “pseudo-science”, respectively. For the first claim, Nietzsche asserts that insights into the actual “necessary effects” of causal phenomena destroy “imaginary causalities” presupposed in the foundational justifications for the customs of a given society. Since Nietzsche views morality as an inherited set of customary beliefs revised over time in response to social contingencies, that which calls these beliefs into question, in an epistemic sense, erodes the typical epistemic backing of moral judgments taken as true judgments by the moral community. Nietzsche then calls attention to the “unscientific character” of the epistemic tendencies of the moral community when it comes to their set of customary beliefs about their typical conduct. Hence, Nietzsche views these epistemic practices involved in the acceptance and advancement of morality as pseudo-science just like popular medicine. Nietzsche again later in the book reinforces his contention that morality fails to meet basic epistemic standards, including rationality.

Who would now be in a position to describe that which will one day do away with moral feelings and judgments! – however sure one may be that the foundations of the latter are all defective and their superstructure is beyond repair: their obligatory force must diminish from day to day, so long as the obligatory force of reason does not diminish!345

The passage then goes on to hold out hope that science could develop new “foundation-stones of new ideals” but, conjoined with his earlier commentary on morality and science, Nietzsche

345 D: 453
implies that so far science only destructively removes such foundations without yet replacing them.

Three other distinctive aspects of Nietzsche’s metaethical critique of morality stand out in *Daybreak*. One, Nietzsche advances the goal of uprooting the concept of punishment out of conceptions of reality.\(^{346}\) Two, Nietzsche denies the validity of ascriptions of moral and value predicates as pertaining to anything “in itself.”\(^{347}\) Three, Nietzsche recommit and emphasizes his denial of any transcendent moral world order.\(^{348}\) Nietzsche then denies that one can meaningfully discuss morality independent of its social context, and that nearly all traditional and religious conceptions of morality one can dismiss as unsupported by scientific knowledge and basic epistemic standards.

Nietzsche, though emphasizing the unreality of moral conceptions clearly thinks that his metaethical critique has a clear therapeutic upshot. Nietzsche views human beings as irrationally overburdened by experiences of guilt, and tends to correlate this with a view of reality in which consequences are viewed as necessary punishments for moral infringements. Also, noting the social plasticity of moral concepts against the background of an indifferent cosmos might actually redirect human attention to the significance of meeting certain optimal conditions of life as potentially revealed by science. Finally, morality becomes a significant matter of reflection and discretion rather than an oppressive internalization of a transcendent authority inflexible in its judgments.

\(^{346}\) D: 13, 208  
\(^{347}\) D: 210  
\(^{348}\) D: 563
In fact, Nietzsche emphasizes this aspect of an inflexible submission to authority as the distinctive feature of morality when viewed descriptively as a historical and social phenomenon. Nietzsche began this descriptive project, as noted before, in *Human*. At aphorism 9 of *Daybreak*, Nietzsche notes that all traditional moralities value the community over and above that of the individual in such a way as to encourage blind conformism and the suppression of individual development. His project also aims to uncover how morality-as-custom originally emerges out of false primitive beliefs.³⁴⁹ Evil chance events or natural disasters arouse great fear in the primitive community and these events eventually are interpreted as manifestations of divine wrath by one of the communal deities. Propitiation rituals develop which in turn rigidify into customary practices over time. These rituals aim to produce symbolic results answering to the needs of propitiation of the divine rather than intelligently avert or encourage actual consequences. Nietzsche gives the excellent example of bathing for purification which fosters a mode of reasoning actually divorced from the significant issue of hygiene because it in fact aims to satisfy some unreal symbolic need felt as real. Nietzsche then claims that this encourages over time a practice of thought that “accords reality a value only insofar as it is capable of being a symbol.”³⁵⁰ Nietzsche then views the origins of morality as stemming from the very views of reality rejected by the metaethical critique as irrational and unscientific.

Nietzsche’s rhetoric often reaches such a strident pitch in his critique of morality and his denial of morality is so pervasive that it raises the legitimate issue of how can he consistently develop his own ethical views while rejecting morality *tout court*. The problem is dissolved by distinguishing between two kinds of ought, or more modestly, by contending that ought-

³⁴⁹ D: 33
³⁵⁰ D: 33
prescriptions need not entail a certain sense of normativity and necessitate a certain reaction to their violation. First, a particular ought-prescription can be viewed as a command legislated as a non-negotiable imperative by an authority, viewed as something one, in fact, must do. Alternatively, a particular ought-prescription can be viewed as a recommendation for a practical course of action and in such a way as to not amount to merely advising someone with regards to prudential considerations. For example, one might recommend that you ought to write an anonymous check to a charity or an organization that promotes certain goods of others, perhaps a cultural institute or a relief program. Such a prescription does not answer to prudential considerations and in some cases may even work against them. This prescription of ought, however, need not be taken as a command or viewed as a non-negotiable and authoritative prescription. The ought-prescription may appeal to one’s reflection on the realization of certain values independent of any authority. Moreover, the violation of an ought-prescription need not entail a consequent assessment of blame or punishment. You may not deserve anything or any blame for failing to heed a recommendation to advance some practical aim. However, an observer may question to what extent one’s cognitive capacities and sense of values has evolved to a certain stage or phase if one does, indeed, fail to heed the prescription. Nietzsche tends to view the assessment of violations in this latter way just as his call for the construction of long-term goals for human culture advances a non-commanding sense of ought and one subject to one’s evolved discretion.351

351 See, e.g., his treatment of cruelty discussed above in the section on Human; see, also, footnotes 284-5. See, also, D: 108.
The First Edition of *The Gay Science*

Nietzsche indicates that he retains his axiological and ethical commitments from both *Human* and *Daybreak* in the first edition of *The Gay Science*. In addition, he introduces the theme of life-affirmation expressed in both his formula of *amor fati* and the existential challenge and thought-experiment of *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*.

Nietzsche most clearly expresses his continued constructivist justificatory orientation in the following passage.\(^{352}\)

We, however, want to become who we are---human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves! To that end we must become the best students and discovers of everything lawful and necessary in the world: we must become physicists in order to be creators in this sense---while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been built in ignorance of physics or in contradiction to it.\(^{353}\)

Once again, he emphasizes that newly developing axiological projects with their attendant ethical implications emerge out of creativity, yet conform to the actual world and the limitations it places upon human beings and their own nature. For instance, he notes how science can lead to different goals with respect to pleasure and pain, because both experiences mutually constitute one another. They do so by moving in the direction of either refined awareness or the converse of desensitization with regard to the natural objects that give rise to either sensation.\(^{354}\)

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\(^{352}\) See also GS: 301 and 337 for direct support and GS: 12 and 124-5 for indirect support.

\(^{353}\) GS: 335

\(^{354}\) GS: 12
Nietzsche makes his commitment to a long-term consequentialism manifest, too. He once again, as consistent with his reflections in *Human*, emphasizes the role of history. Nietzsche develops this emphasis and explains its importance in long-term thinking in the following passage.

*The ‘humanity’ of the future.* --- When I view this age with the eyes of a distant age, I can find nothing odder in present-day man than his peculiar virtue and disease called ‘the sense for history.’ This is the beginning of something completely new and strange in history: if one gave this seed a few centuries and more, it might ultimately become a wonderful growth with an equally wonderful smell that could make our old earth more agreeable to inhabit. We present-day humans are just beginning to form the chain of a very powerful future feeling, link by link --- we hardly know what we are doing.\(^{355}\)

The passage goes on to celebrate feeling the entire history of humanity as one’s own, and if future humans can bear the sum of all past tragedies with an eye towards the future this perhaps could “produce a happiness unknown to humanity so far.” Nietzsche, however, does not just advocate the honest acknowledgment and acceptance of past tragedies, but also thinks that the long-term view puts so-called “evil” actions in a new light.\(^{356}\) From the long-term perspective one must face the possibility that that designated as “evil” may advance and enhance the growth of the human species as a whole. “Large-scale” assessment, in fact, calls into question the very narrow and restricted moral perspectives that reign at a given time and place. Nietzsche here relies on his descriptive account of morality that observed that custom plays such a strong role in

\(^{355}\) GS: 337  
\(^{356}\) GS: 1, 4, 19
moral conceptions that “good” and “evil” tend to evenly parallel the “old” and “new.”

Nietzsche, then, not only seems to allude to the shocking, morally outrageous behavior that his contemporaries might designate as “evil” but also that formerly designated as “evil” such as conducting experiments out of curiosity about natural processes.

337, the passage quoted above, once again, suggests an axiology informed by the promotion of higher culture and the future development of the human species. Nowhere in The Gay Science does Nietzsche precisely sustain his commitment to higher culture more than at 113.

And how far we still are from the time when artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life join with scientific thought so that a higher organic system will develop in relation to which the scholar, the physician, the artist, and the lawmaker, as we know them, would have to appear as paltry antiquities!357

Nietzsche again here echoes his interest from Human in combining the best of human creative and cognitive capacities to advance cultural evolution. Nietzsche also explicitly associates the vita contemplativa, also discussed in Human, with “higher human beings.”358

Nietzsche again does not merely consider human beings. Nietzsche here gives his decisive criticism of axiological anthropocentrism at 115, alluded to often in the first chapter above.359 Nietzsche also seems to suggest, by considering the perspective of the sacrificial animal in this passage, to imply a minimal commitment to ethical non-anthropocentrism.

357 GS: 113
358 GS: 301
359 These passages as well seem to imply a critical stance towards axiological anthropocentrism: 59, 130, 225, and 317.
Sacrifice. --- The sacrificial animal thinks differently about sacrifice than the spectator, but one has never let it have its say.  

The statement implies that the sacrificer completely lacks the perspective of the non-human victim. Nietzsche certainly does not approve of the practice of sacrifice and accentuates its ignorance. Given his demonstrated early sensitivity to animal suffering, and his emphasis on outgrowing cruelty in *Human*, Nietzsche again here suggests that, as consistent with his critique of axiological anthropocentrism, he extends moral consideration to non-human animals by implying that the practice of sacrifice fails to consider the perspective of the animal.

Nietzsche, also, once again indicates a connection between his long-term consequentialism and his particular emphasis on the quotidian. In Section 7, Nietzsche calls for a multi-generational scholarly and collective task of generating a well-researched historical investigation of all moral and cultural phenomena for the purpose of utilizing the sciences to develop future cultural aims.

If all these jobs were done, the most delicate question of all would emerge in the foreground: whether science is able to furnish goals of action after having proved it can take such goals away and annihilate them; and then an experimenting would be in order, in which every kind of heroism could find satisfaction--- an experimenting that might last for centuries and eclipse all the great projects and sacrifices of history to date.  

Nietzsche demonstrates an especial interest in what the experimental results might reveal concerning the quotidian, e.g. daily schedules, yearly plans for work and leisure, diet and

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360 GS: 220; Nietzsche also strongly implies his condemnation of animal cruelty at 312, too.
361 GS: 7
nutrition, and living arrangements. Nietzsche speculates about a possible connection between some fatal mistake concerning diet or consumption and an eventual collapse of a whole culture. Nietzsche also calls into question the predominant work ethic and its consequent devaluation of leisure and idleness, echoing his critique of the structural features of modern society.

In particular, Nietzsche criticizes the newly-developing American work ethic and its influence on Europe. He thinks that this ethic attaches a bad conscience to long reflection and “keeping still”; anyone who dares to visit the countryside or take a vacation must give an excuse for any neglect of work. Nietzsche foresees that the vita contemplativa and manifest feelings of joy might increasingly become the targets of suspicion. However, is the only passage in the book where Nietzsche develops a precise criticism of a specific structural feature of modern society, in this case, the institution of labor. However, at 283, in calling for new human types that wage war for knowledge and “live dangerously,” Nietzsche contrasts these possible future developments with the “sand and slime of present-day civilization and urbanization.”

Nietzsche does not explicitly develop what he views as the problem with urbanization, but given the context of his entire output in the middle period concerning the significance of environmental factors, his reader can surmise that Nietzsche criticizes the reckless thoughtlessness involved in urban development at that time. People crowd the cities with little thought given to diet, sanitation, living conditions, etc. often simply to make ends meet. Nietzsche, as we have seen from Human, viewed great disparities in wealth, and thoughtlessness towards the quotidian as peculiar problems of industrialized, modern societies. Urbanization, then, advances with

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362 GS: 134
363 GS: 329
364 GS: 283
hazardous speed the ills of modern society with its complete neglect of the quotidian environment.

Nietzsche inaugurates his well-known discussions on the themes of life-affirmation against the backdrop of these echoed themes from *Human* and *Daybreak*, e.g. long-term thinking, criticisms of axiological anthropocentrism, and the revaluation of the quotidian. He introduces the theme at the beginning of Book IV specially titled “St. Januarius”, at 276. Nietzsche dramatizes his resolve to “see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them” or *amor fati*, as a New Year’s resolution. Here he also utilizes the Zarathustra refrain of becoming a “Yes-sayer.” Book IV then ends, at 342, with a preview of *Zarathustra* right after introducing the notion of *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* at 341. In the aphorism just before, 340, Nietzsche expresses his wish that Socrates, whom he admires for courage and wisdom, had kept silent right before his death. Nietzsche interprets his last words, i.e. “O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster”, as an indirect condemnation of life “as a disease.” Asclepius received thank-offerings from those cured of an illness, so Nietzsche implies that Socrates views his death as a cure from the sickness of life. This then prefaces his direct address to the reader at 341. Nietzsche asks his reader what he or she would do if confronted with the prospect that every detail of his or her existence will endlessly repeat. The aphorism challenges the reader with a series of questions to test his or her attitude towards life. Certainly, both the challenge to the reader and the formula of *amor fati* emphasize the affirmation of reality as it is, consistent with the emphasis of the book on intellectual integrity, and in particular, the first part of “the task” (as given in chapter 2 above) concerning the natural world, described at 109. Recall that this passage explicitly highlighted Nietzsche’s rejection of any form of anthropomorphism in

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conceptions of the natural world, and his unequivocal rejection of metaphysical anthropocentrism. A few passages later, at 115, Nietzsche gives one of his more explicit rejections of axiological anthropocentrism. The later theme of life-affirmation in Book IV advances an experimental perspective and an attempt at affirming a “de-divinized” world characterized by human-centeredness. Nietzsche makes it clear that people must accept what is necessary in existence, but by posing the affirmation of everything necessary as a resolution, as a challenge, as a question, Nietzsche certainly invites critical reflection on adopted values and the prospects of future action, too. Nietzsche leaves this theme here mostly open-ended and critically under described. However, his reader must note the context surrounding the introduction of this theme and that it emerges not merely alongside his first critique of morality but also in the advancement of a positive ethical vision begun in *Human*. This vision emphasized the future development of the creative and cognitive capacities of the human species with special focus on the environmental factors that might condition this advance in cultural evolution. Nietzsche also makes it clear in the middle period that the implementation of this vision must not proceed with the same mistaken metaphysical and axiological anthropocentric presuppositions of the past. At several passages throughout the middle period, quoted in the previous sections above, Nietzsche demonstrates an awareness and sensitivity to the values and perspectives of animals. This certainly informs the context of his affirmation of the natural world as a holistic whole as given in the theme of life-affirmation and *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. Though not always marking with precision his emphasis on life itself, taken in context, Nietzsche gives every indication that affirming life as it is and living in such a manner as to facilitate such an attitude, involves affirming the natural world beyond one’s own desires.
and affects. For Nietzsche, this means accepting a world not centered on human beings, and acknowledging non-human perspectives.

IV. Nietzsche’s Later Thought

So far in this chapter, I have presented material in chronological order. *Zarathustra*, however, poses unique interpretative problems which can only properly be explicated after a full understanding of the context both before and after the completion of the work. The context before needs to be taken into account because Nietzsche introduces the work at the climax of his so-called middle period. The context after needs to be taken into account because Nietzsche continues until his last creative year to indicate the central place of this cryptic text in the corpus of his writings. I then jump ahead to the culmination of his critique of Christianity in *The Anti-Christ* which continues to evince Nietzsche’s critical stance towards axiological and ethical anthropocentrism. Next, I give an overview of the post-*Zarathustra* writings. These writings most exemplify what Acampora refers to as Nietzsche’s “homo-exclusive discourse”, so I will comment on passages that nonetheless demonstrate a continuing rejection of various forms of anthropocentrism and the revaluation of the quotidian. Finally, I advance a possible reading of *Zarathustra* that attempts to make sense of its central location bridging the middle and late writings and that honors the consistent critical attitude towards various forms of anthropocentrism.
The Culmination of His Critique of Christianity

Nietzsche continues in the late period to criticize Christianity, in particular, for its anti-natural outlook and hostility to life. However, nowhere does Nietzsche give a sustained and explicit overview of his critical position like he does in *The Anti-Christ*. I look here at significant passages of the text in which Nietzsche once again echoes a non-anthropocentric view concerning an overall estimation of human distinctiveness, the problem with Christian concepts, and what makes an emphasis on “the beyond” so insidious, respectively.

The first chapter often referred to *AC* 14 and with good reason. Here Nietzsche decisively rejects axiological anthropocentrism.

We have stopped deriving humanity from ‘spirit,’ from ‘divinity,’ we have stuck human beings back among the animals. We see them as the strongest animals because they are the most cunning: one consequence of this is their spirituality. On the other hand, we are also opposed to a certain vanity that re-emerges here too, acting as if human beings were the great hidden goal of animal evolution. Humans are in no way the crown of creation, all beings occupy the same level of perfection…And even this is saying too much: comparatively speaking, humans are the biggest failures, the sickliest animals who have strayed the most dangerously far from their instincts --- but of course and in spite of everything, the most *interesting* animals as well!“367

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367 AC: 14
The passage goes on to question the distinctive value placed on consciousness, when looked at from a purely naturalistic viewpoint, i.e. evaluating a trait purely in terms of its contribution to the functioning of the organic system of a particular organism of a particular species.

People used to see consciousness, ‘spirit,’ as proof that humanity is descended from something higher, that humanity is divine; people were advised to become perfect by acting like turtles and pulling their senses inside themselves, cutting off contact with worldly things and shedding their mortal shrouds: after this, the essential element would remain, the ‘pure spirit.’ We are more sensible about this too: we see the development of consciousness, ‘spirit,’ as a symptom of precisely the relative imperfection of the organism, as an experimenting, a groping, mistaking, as an exertion that is sapping an unnecessarily large amount of strength away from the nervous system, -- we deny that anything can be made perfect as long as it is still being made conscious.368

Nietzsche makes it decisively clear that he does not accord any particular higher value to human beings as juxtaposed with other species. Nietzsche not only rejects axiological anthropocentrism, but he also appears to employ a conception of species perfection to evaluate the present biological condition of the human species.369 Nietzsche, also, possibly has in mind here a conception of species welfare based on to what extent the species can utilize faculties peculiar to that species in the most instinctive way, i.e. “perfectly” manifest species-specific faculties.

368 AC: 14 “Consciousness” and “spirit” are the English translations, respectively, for Bewusstsein and Geist. The phrase “development of consciousness” translates one word, Bewusstwerden. “Spirituality”, from the first part of the quote above --see footnote 367-- is the translation for Geistigkeit.

369 Recall that Nietzsche appeared to do have done this before in his early philosophy. See UM III: 6.
Nietzsche not only rejects Christianity’s axiological anthropocentrism. He also reasserts claims from the middle period that its central concepts impose negative valences onto the natural world, and human nature in particular.

All church concepts are known for what they are, the most malicious counterfeits that exist to devalue nature and natural values; the priests themselves are known for what they are, the most dangerous type of parasite, the true poisonous spiders of life… We know, our consciences are conscious of it these days --- just what value those uncanny inventions of the priests and the church have, how they were used to reduce humanity to such a state of self-desecration that the sight of it fills you with disgust --- the concepts ‘beyond,’ ‘Last Judgment,’ ‘immortality of the soul’, the ‘soul’ itself; these are instruments of torture, these are systems of cruelty that enable the priests to gain control, maintain control...\(^\text{370}\)

Nietzsche here does not give a full explanation of the way in which these concepts devalue nature in particular (see the quote below from section 15), but at section 43 he does develop a more specific explanation for how the concept of a ‘beyond’ foists a negative valence onto nature.

When the emphasis of life is put on the ‘beyond’ rather than on life itself --- when it is put on nothingness --- then the emphasis has been completely removed from life. The enormous lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, everything natural in the instincts, ---everything beneficial and life-enhancing in the instincts, everything that guarantees the future, now arouses mistrust. To live in this way,

\(^{370}\) AC: 38
so that there is no *point* to life any more, *this* now becomes the ‘meaning’ of life… What is the point of public spirit, of being grateful for your lineage or for your ancestors, what is the point of working together, of confidence, of working towards any sort of common goal or even keeping one in mind?\(^\text{371}\)

These criticisms, particularly regarding the future, seem to apply even more to the eschatological concept of the “Last Judgment.” Awaiting an impending immediate cessation of all natural activities which may come in a hundred years or in the next minute removes any meaningful concern for the future, not only of natural phenomena and the environment but may even make personal future plans appear pointless. Nietzsche though makes it clear that despite the doctrine’s implications on one’s own future, Christian soteriology not only fosters a particularly extreme form of axiological and ethical anthropocentrism but an unenlightened egoism in which only the most base and petty instincts of the ego attain fulfillment.

‘Salvation of the soul’ --- in plain language: ‘the world revolves around *me*’…

Granting ‘immortality’ to every Tom, Dick, and Harry has been the most enormous and vicious attempt to assassinate *noble* humanity.\(^\text{372}\)

Nietzsche ties these criticisms of Christianity’s crass and baseline egoism to his rejection of egalitarianism. Here, in the quotations above, Nietzsche once again possibly presupposes a conception of species welfare by which to reject the Christian, and then the subsequent egalitarian influence, on the constitution of human nature.\(^\text{373}\) For Nietzsche, these concepts also give rise to the resultant co-dependency of adherents on religious institutions and their officiating

\(^{371}\) AC: 43
\(^{372}\) AC: 43
\(^{373}\) See also AC: 3-5.
representatives. Human beings exert endless amounts of time and energy on purported transcendent realities to the great neglect of their own bodies and the constitutive aspects of their natural environment.

Nietzsche ultimately, then, faults Christian concepts for grounding their evaluations outside of reality. In section 15, Nietzsche explains how this lack of touch with reality fosters an anti-natural set of evaluations.

In Christianity, morality and religion are both completely out of touch with reality. Completely imaginary causes (‘God’, ‘soul’, ‘I’, ‘spirit’, ‘free will’, or even an ‘unfree’ one); completely imaginary effects (‘sin’, ‘redemption’, ‘grace’, ‘punishment’, ‘forgiveness of sins’). Contact between imaginary causes (‘God’, ‘spirits’, ‘souls’); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric; total absence of any concept of natural cause); an imaginary psychology (complete failure to understand oneself, interpretations of pleasant or unpleasant general sensations – for instance, the states of nervus sympathicus – using the sign language of religious-moral idiosyncrasy, - ‘repentance’, ‘pangs of conscience’, ‘temptation by the devil’, ‘the presence of God’); an imaginary teleology (‘the kingdom of God’, ‘the Last Judgment’, ‘eternal life’). --- This entirely fictitious world can be distinguished from the world of dreams (to the detriment of the former) in that dreams reflect reality while Christianity falsifies, devalues, and negates reality. Once the concept of ‘nature’ had been invented as a counter to the idea of ‘God’, ‘natural’ had to mean ‘reprehensible’, --- that whole fictitious world is rooted in a
hatred of the natural (— of reality! —), it is the expression of a profound sense of unease concerning reality…

The passage goes on to explain that Nietzsche sees the root of these evaluations in an extreme susceptibility to pain and suffering, an obvious and intrinsic part of life for sentient creatures. Nietzsche here explains that Christianity fosters a worldview in which two ontological poles—God and nature, respectively—stand at opposite ends on the value spectrum. Nietzsche implies that he thinks that Christian concepts devalue all natural processes and not merely those associated with human nature. He even here specifically refers to the Christian view of reality as “anthropocentric” (i.e. metaphysical anthropocentrism, given the usage of the term in the context). The passage above follows section 14. Taken together, they both provide evidence that the Christian complex of beliefs resulting in a conjoined metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism is at the center of why Nietzsche makes such a point of critiquing Christianity. His critical assessment of the central concepts of the religion mirror this twofold aspect of his critique, particularly regarding the concept of a ‘beyond.’ Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity then shows that his reader should think of more than just human nature and personal energy when Nietzsche discusses the “anti-natural” and “hostility to life.” For Nietzsche has in mind the whole conceptual edifice of Christianity as it purports to justly represent what is real. This criticism sets quite the precedent in evaluating religious systems of belief. Not only can philosophers assess religions for their psychological effects (for which Nietzsche also certainly criticizes Christianity) but also their overall metaphysical outlook, and whether or not a given outlook encourages or discourages a meaningful, non-anthropocentric relationship to the natural world.
Nietzsche’s Other Post-Zarathustra Writings

Nietzsche’s writings after Zarathustra represent well the claim made by Acampora that Nietzsche’s discourse is homo-exclusive. One might easily concur with Acampora that all of Nietzsche’s writings are homo-exclusive, but the natural world itself is a prominent theme in such texts as “Schopenhauer as Educator”, i.e. the perfecting or completion of nature, and The Gay Science, i.e. the exposition of “the task”, amor fati, etc. Certainly, most of the evidence for Nietzsche’s critical stance towards various forms of anthropocentrism is taken from the middle period. Nonetheless, as the culmination of Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity demonstrates above, Nietzsche still rejected various forms of anthropocentrism, specifically metaphysical and axiological, in 1888. Zarathustra and the rest of his later works more or less fall in between these two times. Therefore, this continued rejection of anthropocentrism fully characterizes Nietzsche’s position across his writing career and informs the context of both Zarathustra and works in which he focuses primarily on human cultural institutions, such as morality in the Genealogy.

A possible explanation for why it’s harder to find passages critical of various forms of anthropocentrism in many of the later works (though you can find some explicit and implicit evidence of this retained position, see above and below) is that Nietzsche focuses on the second part of his “task” from the time of Beyond Good and Evil forward, presented and explicated at BGE 230.375 Nietzsche, then, after setting up an interpretative framework of the natural world free of anthropomorphism and metaphysical anthropocentrism, shifts to the task of reintegrating, or “translating” the human species itself back into this “redeemed” nature. An obvious problem with this approach, however, is that published passages concerning der Wille zur Macht are

375 A special thanks to John Nolt for this suggestion in discussion on the later works.
exclusively found in these published writings, with the exception of Zarathustra. I interpreted *der Wille zur Macht*, however, above in chapter 2, as the culmination of the first part of the “task” inaugurated publicly in the first edition of *The Gay Science*. Nietzsche then refers to *der Wille zur Macht*, primarily in *Beyond* and *Genealogy*, as precisely the nature back into which he translates the human species. Moreover, even though the evidence is slimmer, Nietzsche does indicate that he does not slip into endorsing any form of anthropocentrism between the middle period and 1888. Certainly, much of Nietzsche’s positions on various axiological and ethical issues evolved and developed since the time of the middle period, but his basic long-term approach, one characterized by an apparent constructivist justificatory strategy, never appears to waver.\[^{376}\] The most significant change is no doubt the emphasis of criticism in his structural critique of modern society. Whereas Nietzsche in the middle period could echo such progressivist criticisms such as noting the problems with disparity in wealth, the institution of labor, and the military-industrial complex, the later Nietzsche levels direct attacks on liberalism itself, and what he views as the desiderata of post-Christian European moralities and social ideals, e.g. the abolition of suffering and the emphasis on individual rights. However, issues such as the revaluation of the quotidian and axiological anthropocentrism do not hinge on this shift. Nietzsche simply comes to the conclusion that a liberal social order will not ensure the best results concerning quotidian affairs. The rest of the section then focuses on the few indicators where Nietzsche evinces a critical stance towards various forms of anthropocentrism.

*Beyond Good and Evil* contains no decisive evidence by which to assess Nietzsche on the issues of axiological and ethical anthropocentrism. However, Nietzsche makes it very clear to his reader, for instance, at 230, that he is engaged in evaluating the human species as an organic

\[^{376}\] BGE: Preface, 62, 203, 208, 211-12; GS: 356; GM I: 17; II: 24
totality and the prospects for its future.\textsuperscript{377} This again suggests a conception of species welfare like that utilized in \textit{The Anti-Christ} and earlier in “Schopenhauer as Educator.” This, then, betrays a naturalistic scheme and criteria of value. The exposition of the second part of the “task” at 230 confirms this because Nietzsche indicates there and throughout the text that he accepts no historically given human standards of value and aims to explain human phenomena on purely naturalistic grounds. Nietzsche implies that such a descriptive, naturalistic assessment can be used to assess various systems of value to determine the organic health of the entire species. Nietzsche then presupposes naturalistic values, such as some type of conception of species welfare by which to advance his descriptions and assessments. Unfortunately, Nietzsche does not make this conception explicit and clear. However, recall his emphasis on the enhancement of cognitive and creative capacities during the middle period. His presupposed conception no doubt calls for the enhancement of these capacities in so far as they are successfully integrated into the organic systems of society and the individual, respectively. Nietzsche’s disparaging remarks on the special value of human consciousness square with this emphasis on the enhancement of unique capacities, so long as one registers Nietzsche’s concern for the integration of higher capacities into the overall organic system of a particular form of life, as indicated later at \textit{AC} 14.

\textit{After Beyond Good and Evil}, Nietzsche published a second edition of \textit{The Gay Science}, adding Book V, “We Fearless Ones” to the text. Two particular passages warrant attention from this new addition. First, Nietzsche explains that removing human valuations from the world does not entail axiological nihilism, once again indicating his interest in a non-anthropocentric recognition of value in the world. Nietzsche does not though explicate or even fully

\textsuperscript{377} BGE: 44, 62, 188, 203, 212, 257
acknowledge the reality of such value in the world. However, he does clearly find it absurd to
dismiss the world as valueless after jettisoning axiological anthropocentrism.

We have become hard-boiled, cold, and tough in the realization that the way of
the world is not at all divine --- even by human standards it is not rational,
merciful, or just. We know it: the world we live in is ungodly, immoral,
‘inhuman’; for far too long we have interpreted it falsely and mendaciously,
though according to our wish and will for veneration, that is, according to a need.
For man is a venerating animal! But he is also a mistrustful one; and the world is
not worth what we thought is about the most certain thing our mistrust has finally
gotten hold of. The more mistrust, the more philosophy. We take care not to
claim that the world is worth less; indeed, it would seem laughable to us today if
man were to aim at inventing values that were supposed to surpass the value of
the real world. That is exactly what we have turned away from, as from an
extravagant aberration of human vanity and unreason that for long was not
recognized as such.378

Nietzsche also later adds an important clarification regarding his frequent criticisms of human
vanity and the present human condition, i.e. he does not want to be taken for a misanthrope.

The writer of this book is no misanthrope; today one pays too dearly for hatred of
man. In order to hate the way one formerly hated the human being, Timonically,
wholly, without exception, with one’s whole heart, with the whole love of hatred,

378 GS: 346
Sure, Nietzsche oddly appeals to his contempt to defend himself against misanthropy. His point, though, is that his contempt is ironically a product of his love for humanity. His contempt, unlike misanthropy, is levelled not against the whole of humanity but against certain parts, aspects, or types of humanity. Nietzsche, throughout all his writings, mostly levels contempt against mendacity and presumptuousness, and their underlying presence in most previous human conceptions of the world and systems of value. He also expresses contempt for certain human types, such as “the last man.” Nietzsche goes on to imply that his “contempt” is also an outgrowth of the current state of knowledge, even referring to himself and the other “fearless ones” as “the most modern of moderns.” Nietzsche conveys, then, a spirit of openness and receptivity to the world as it is, unparalleled perhaps by any other philosopher. This expresses the fundamental theme of The Gay Science, and so helps to explain the puzzling addition of a fifth book to a complete text that ends as poignantly as it did in 1882.

In the Genealogy, Nietzsche returns primarily to themes from Beyond, and develops his macro-historical interpretation of moral phenomena in further detail. The essays roughly treat of three identified major historical phases in human cultural evolution. The first essay primarily touches on the ancient historic heritage of humanity, the second essay speculates on prehistoric developments, and the third essay mostly deals with modernity. Once again, Nietzsche clearly focuses on human societies and cultural institutions, but he betrays in a few passages a much larger a set of concerns beyond the scope of his discourse. He ends his first essay with a call for

379 GS: 379
380 TSZ I, “Zarathustra’s Prologue”: 5
381 GS: 379
historians and scientists to research the effects of given moralities on the human species so that the philosopher may legislate future values. The naturalistic program called for here resonates with Nietzsche’s continuing long-term consequentialist approach and his emphasis on paying more attention to quotidian concerns. Once again, nearly at the conclusion of the essay, Nietzsche also clarifies in the second essay the kinds of concerns that fall under the province of what he means by that “hostile to life.”

For too long, man has viewed his natural inclinations with an ‘evil eye,’ so that they finally came to be intertwined with ‘bad conscience’ in him. A reverse experiment should be possible in principle --- but who has sufficient strength? --- by this, I mean an intertwining of bad conscience with perverse inclinations, all those other-worldly aspirations, alien to the senses, the instincts, to nature, to animals, in short all the ideals which up to now have been hostile to life and have defamed the world.

Though Nietzsche ultimately makes a point here concerning the attitude of human beings to their own nature, he indicates that the kinds of ideals he berates for their life-hostility not only denigrate human nature but other living aspects of nature, too, including animals. Finally, in the third essay, in which Nietzsche zooms back in on the modern condition of moral ideals, he takes a rare and direct shot at the cultural hubris involved in developments associated with the climax of modernity, i.e. the industrial revolution.

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382 GM I: 17
383 GM II: 24
*Hubris* today characterizes our whole attitude towards nature, our rape of nature with the help of machines and the completely unscrupulous inventiveness of technicians and engineers;\(^{384}\)

These passages should not surprise Nietzsche’s readers, for the very extreme naturalism that Nietzsche uses to reevaluate human institutions presupposes an axiological orientation more expansive than the human species itself. This applied naturalism towards human institutions fits well with a deeply non-anthropocentric orientation towards axiology.

Nietzsche continues to focus on human culture in his discussion of nature in *Twilight of the Idols*. The end of “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man” at 47-49, expresses the climax of the application of his long-term consequentialist naturalism to European civilization. Nietzsche, at 47, emphasizes that great developments in culture require the most disciplined focus on quotidian matters for many generations. He then, in 48 and 49, contrasts Rousseau and Goethe regarding a “return to nature.” He highlights Goethe’s realism, especially the recognition of the ways in which reality sets limits on human aspirations, and how his life and pursuits expresses the cultural *ethos* of the Renaissance, including “nature-idolatry.” Rousseau, on the other hand, calls for a sentimental return to a Romanticized, thoroughly falsified view of the natural world and advances what, for Nietzsche, amounts to the most anti-natural of doctrines, i.e. the value of equality. Earlier in the text, Nietzsche attacks the Western tradition, primarily Christianity, for its hostility to life.\(^{385}\) Once again, though Nietzsche clearly zeroes in on matters of human culture and morality, recalling the quoted passage above from the *Genealogy*, his reader has no

\(^{384}\) GM III: 9

\(^{385}\) See, e.g., TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, “Morality as Anti-Nature”
reason to expect that he fundamentally shifts his orientation away from an axiological non-anthropocentric naturalism.

Finally, in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche defines his very philosophical personality by his revaluation of the quotidian. He also echoes and clarifies his views on the anti-natural aspects of fundamental Christian concepts. In fact, these two themes centrally inform the sections “Why I am so Clever” and “Why I am a Destiny,” respectively. For Nietzsche, the two themes also go hand and hand, and the contrast of these two themes at “Why I am so Clever” 10, as quoted here below, sheds some light on what Nietzsche means by describing his philosophy with the formulation “Dionysus versus the Crucified.”

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At this point, a more general reflection is called for. I will be asked why I have been talking about all those petty matters that people usually think are not worth worrying about; I am not doing myself any good, particularly if I am destined to take on great tasks. Answer: these petty concerns--- nutrition, location, climate, recuperation, the whole casuistry of selfishness--- are far more important than all the concepts people have considered important so far. This is exactly where people have to start re-educating themselves. The things that humanity used to think seriously about are not even realities, just figments of the imagination or, to put it more strongly, *lies* from the bad instincts of sick natures who were harmful in the deepest sense--- all the concepts of ‘God,’ the ‘soul,’ ‘virtue,’ ‘sin,’ the ‘beyond,’ ‘truth,’ ‘eternal life’...

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386 EH: “Why I am a Destiny,” 9
387 EH: “Why I am so Clever,” 10
Christianity, then, with its set of anti-natural concepts and values does not make for a good quotidian life whereas the emphasis on the Dionysian celebrates all the formerly neglected aspects of existence i.e. one’s sensory experience of the earth, the body, etc.\footnote{Recall that Del Caro views \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra} as synergizing both the positive aspects of the Dionysian from \textit{Birth}, such as the experience of immanence, and the revaluation of the quotient from \textit{Human}, in particular, in the doctrine of \textit{die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen}.} Nietzsche then, when focused later in the book on his destiny as the first truly anti-Christian philosopher recapitulates this emphasis, this time shedding more light on the downside of Christian concepts.

The concept ‘God’ invented as the counter-concept to life, --- it makes a terrible unity of everything that is most harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole deadly hostility to life! The concept of the ‘beyond,’ the ‘true world,’ invented to devalue the only world there is, --- to deprive our earthly reality of any goal, reason, or task! The concept ‘soul,’ ‘spirit,’ finally even ‘immortal soul,’ invented in order to make the body despised, to make it sick--- ‘holy’---, to treat as frivolous all the things about life that deserve to be taken very seriously--- questions of nutrition, residence, spiritual diet, treatment of the sick, cleanliness, weather! ‘Salvation of the soul’ instead of health- \ldots\footnote{EH: “Why I am a Destiny,” 9}

These inversions encompass varying widths of applicability. He contrasts a focus on health with soteriology, for example. This suggests an inversion on the desired primary emphasis in one’s own self-care. Hence, he replaces a focus on ‘the soul’ with the body. Nietzsche, once again, however, indicates that his set of inversions expand beyond an exclusive concern for human nature, despite his ongoing homo-exclusive discourse. This culminates in Nietzsche’s view of ‘God’ as the ultimate counter-concept to life itself. His reader can easily conjure everything this
inversion involves starting with the substitution of a created and imposed moral order on a teleological, anthropocentric hierarchy of living beings with the design-less, amoral, even immoral (because life evolves precisely through that taken to be exemplary of immorality, e.g. violence, exploitation, domination, etc.), evolution of living forces. An authentic non-anthropocentric naturalism can’t help but challenge and call into question the moral senses of “good” and “evil” inherited from the monotheistic tradition. Nietzsche, at the end of his career, gestures once more to why he criticizes every compromise with the dominant, inherited senses of moral and axiological concepts.

The Peculiar Case of Zarathustra

Nietzsche clearly considered *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* his most important work. The work poses a legion of extraordinary interpretative questions, particularly because it defies not only traditional philosophical exposition, but any convenient classification of literary genre, too. The clear artistic nature of the work calls into question what can be precisely understood (in an analytic philosophical context) of its manifold nature-imagery, its poetic celebration of natural phenomena, and the protagonist’s intimate experiences with animals and the solitude of wilderness landscapes. I will here limit myself, then, to two primary interpretative and philosophical concerns from the previous literature, the meaning and status of the notions *der Übermensch* and *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, respectively.

Various positions have been put forth concerning the environmental upshot of these respective notions. I evaluate these interpretative positions and mark out a plausible stance to

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390 EH, “Why I Write Such Good Books”, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”
take regarding these notions by taking the following approach. First, I see no reason not to take
into account Nietzsche’s explicit comments about the text and its two central notions as given in
Ecce Homo. Second, I highlight the context of both Nietzsche’s written production right before
and after the publication of Zarathustra in the middle and late periods, respectively, where
Nietzsche evinces continuity in his overall axiological and ethical point of view. This includes
both editions of The Gay Science, and his later work overall. I contend then that Nietzsche’s
central notions in the text must be understood in the light of his commitment to his long-term
ethical outlook, informed not only by his revaluation of the quotidian but also his firm
commitment to axiological non-anthropocentrism and his possible ethical non-anthropocentrism.

Interpreters greatly differ in their environmental assessment of the figure of der
Übermensch. Heidegger and Parkes stand at opposite extremes regarding the interpretation of
the notion. Heidegger, recall, thinks that this figure represents the culmination of amassing
power for its own sake. For Heidegger, this represents a unique human elite the production of
which justifies the exploitation of weaker forms of nature. For Parkes, on the contrary, the figure
represents a sage-like character who deeply transcends not only an anthropocentric outlook, but
even a biocentric outlook. Acampora and Del Caro also offer distinctive views on der
Übermensch. Acampora thinks that the figure represents the overcoming of heavily influential
environmental conditions, willing to mobilize lesser forces of nature in its quest to transcend any
environmentally determining factors. Del Caro, on the other hand, closer to Parkes, advocates
that this represents a distinctive ethical type of human being whose unique relationship to the
natural world “brings meaning to the earth.” I will now evaluate these perspectives in the light
of Nietzsche’s own explicit commentary in Ecce Homo and the context that informs the
production of Zarathustra.
In section 1 of “Why I Write Such Good Books” from *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche not only offers a crash course on interpreting the figure of *der Übermensch* but also advises readers on avoiding certain crucial interpretative mistakes about his work in general. Nietzsche warns readers against turning himself into their own image, “idealist” readings of his work, and counsels against dismissing that not initially understood. Nietzsche applies these admonitions to potential interpretations of *der Übermensch*, explicitly rejecting any reading that makes the figure out to be a “half saint, half genius” or any association with the “cult of the hero.”

He further counsels against any Darwinist interpretation of the notion. This figure is often associated with Nietzsche’s comments about “breeding” but there is scanty published evidence that Nietzsche links these two discussions tightly together. As we have seen throughout the chapter, Nietzsche advances at all stages of his career a view calling for cultural evolution. This, from the middle period forward, consists and comes about through the advancement of the natural and historical sciences. When Nietzsche discusses “breeding”, for instance, in the *Twilight of the Idols*, he principally does so in the context of evaluating the health of a culture.\(^{391}\) Though Nietzsche does view cultural and physical health as closely related, an interpreter should be cautious in attributing to Nietzsche some fully developed eugenics scheme. It’s not as if Nietzsche does not advocate for a culture’s reevaluation of the selection element in reproduction. He simply does not reduce cultural advancement to a conscious regulation of reproduction, nor does he explicitly discuss reproduction in passages on *der Übermensch* from *Zarathustra*.

The type designates one with the “highest constitutional excellence” and “would even look more like a Cesare Borgia than a Parsifal.” Much is often made of this comment. It

\(^{391}\) TI, “‘Improving’ Humanity”; compare this section, also, with “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man”: 47.
warrants comparison to the comment, in the *Genealogy*, where Nietzsche calls Napoleon a “synthesis” of a “monster [Unmensch] and Übermensch.” Note that in neither passage does Nietzsche equate *der Übermensch* with either of these infamous personages, but he uses these synthetic juxtapositions to remind readers that the figure “comes from the mouth of a Zarathustra, a destroyer of morals.” So far, interpretations like those of Heidegger and Acampora seem more in line with *Ecce Homo*’s radical stress on understanding this type as a culminating exemplar of Nietzsche’s “immoralism.”

However, later in the text at “Why I am a Destiny,” Nietzsche further clarifies this positive contrast that he draws against the rejected idealistic types associated with traditional morality. Nietzsche even formulates his notion more precisely claiming that *der Übermensch* “conceives of reality as it is…” and “contains in itself everything terrible and questionable about reality, *this is the only way someone can achieve greatness.*” Nietzsche here describes a figure that undertakes the painful process of internalizing the hard truths about reality (presumably including human nature) into one’s very being. Nietzsche then prizes nothing more than someone who can stomach the hard truths and genuinely prove so by incorporating them in one’s quest for greatness. Nietzsche, by mentioning certain infamous historical personages, emphasizes the necessary ruthlessness involved in the successful development of such a process. This reflects the same spirit of honesty that characterizes Nietzsche’s exposition of the “task” at *GS* 109--- where he rejects metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism--- and *BGE* 230, where he calls for a translation of human nature back into naturalistic categories as opposed to the idealistic categories of traditional moral interpretations. As has been shown, both before and

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392 GM I: 16
393 Haar views *der Übermensch* as associated with the phrase “Caesar with Christ’s soul” from one of the late *Nachlass* fragments, WP: 983, but there is not enough contextual evidence within the passage to warrant that association.
after *Zarathustra*, not only does Nietzsche explicitly reject metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism, but he also strongly suggests both an epistemological and ethical non-anthropocentric outlook, too. Furthermore, from “Schopenhauer as Educator” to *The Anti-Christ* Nietzsche often appears to apply a notion of species welfare in his evaluation of humanity *qua* species.

Overall, Heidegger’s interpretation appears at best a caricature of the aspects mentioned above in *Ecce Homo*, and at worst simply a gross misreading. In fact, what Nietzsche explicitly says about *der Übermensch* does not serve up much evidence for any of the proposed positions. Nonetheless, perhaps Nietzsche overcompensates in his warnings in *Ecce Homo* only because he fills his descriptions of *der Übermensch* in *Zarathustra* with that which may sound “idealistic” or “Romantic.” After all, the figure somehow “brings meaning to the Earth”! The warnings in *Ecce Homo* then temper a notion that must be understood sandwiched between the retained positive ethical vision inaugurated in *Human, All Too Human*—specifically, a long-term orientation deeply qualified by axiological non-anthropocentrism and the revaluation of the quotidian—and Nietzsche’s shifting attitudes on the macro-structural constitution of human societies in the later work. The major contrast on either side of *Zarathustra* appears stark only in the juxtaposition of Nietzsche’s earlier progressivist criticisms (e.g. his critique of great disparities in wealth) with his later unequivocal denunciations of egalitarianism and the then dominant versions of consequentialism, i.e. either positing the abolition of suffering or the maximization of happiness conceived as pleasure as the highest ethical aim. Another point that must be kept in mind is that contemporary readers may too quickly import an association of today’s environmental thought with a kind of moral idealism. Nietzsche perhaps would criticize much of contemporary environmental ethics today for excessive moralization and idealism.
However, Nietzsche, particularly in *Ecce Homo*, associates “idealism” with interpreting the natural world with moral categories and an unquestioned allegiance to these traditional categories.

There will be no final word whatsoever when it comes to interpreting Nietzsche’s elusive notion. However, I contend that a plausible interpretation must take into account the overall axiological and ethical context that informs Nietzsche’s critique of morality begun in the middle period and completed in the later work. *Der Übermensch* clearly does not mark a development in the biological evolution of the human species, but probably does represent a future task of cultural evolution. The figure represents a complete break with idealism and traditional morality. Given the prevalence of Nietzsche’s call for the long-term enhancement of the human species itself, the idea doubtless poetically marks this future direction. It should also not be ignored that Nietzsche presents this notion against the backdrop of a poetic reverie that emphasizes not just the body as opposed to “the soul” but also the “Earth” as opposed to an otherworldly heaven. The notion cannot be isolated from Nietzsche’s ongoing critique of various forms of anthropocentrism and his mission to enhance the bodily experience of everyday life. Therefore, I do not think either Heidegger or Acampora provide plausible interpretations of this central Zarathustran idea. Del Caro, on the other hand, correctly emphasizes that the notion represents a type of human being that undergoes some sort of deep, honest experience of the natural world understood as the only reality as it is without the consolations of false metaphysical and moral categories. Given the strong warnings of *Ecce Homo* against interpreting this figure through the lens of heroic and saintly types, even construing it as a “genius”, Parkes’s suggestion of a non-anthropocentric sage-like character seems too strong.
Much of the previous literature on the question of Nietzsche’s environmental thought did not touch upon *die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. Only Del Caro explicitly addresses the notion in this context. Recall that he contends that Nietzsche primarily utilizes this notion to affirm the neglected quotidian aspects of life. This central notion in *Zarathustra*, for Del Caro, endows the minutest details of one’s everyday physical reality with the same significance attributed to the religio-metaphysical ideals of the past (e.g. the salvation of the soul.) No other author gives due explicit attention to the idea, but Acampora, in his discussion of *amor fati*, raises a unique worry about the environmental upshot involved in affirming every detail of fate. He asks whether or not Nietzsche’s understanding of *amor fati* inevitably involves affirming the very impulses that foster the destruction of the natural environment. Nietzsche certainly demands much of himself in his attempt to love everything necessary in existence. Nietzsche, at *BGE* 56, associates the affirmative ideal of *amor fati* with the notion of *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen*. Acceptance of *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* implicitly tests the extent to which one might embrace and affirm all of reality “as it was and is.” Acampora then raises a legitimate worry concerning the environmental upshot of Nietzsche’s attitude towards all the details of reality. Nietzsche, doubtless, affirms and accepts suffering and destruction as a necessary part of existence.

Moreover, Nietzsche explicitly claims that *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* is the primary idea of his central work.
The basic idea of the work, *the thought of the eternal return*, the highest possible formula of affirmation ---, belongs to August of the year 1881: it was thrown on paper with the title “6,000 feet beyond people and time.”\(^\text{394}\)

Nietzsche also clearly explains how he views the idea. He does not publicly see it as a definitive, verifiable cosmological doctrine, nor as an ethical maxim, but “the highest possible formula of affirmation.” The section goes on to explain how the idea emerges from the Dionysian, originally conceived as a natural artistic force or primal feeling of frenzy operative in the production of music and tragedy. Recall from the section on Del Caro in chapter 1, that even there in the early work, Nietzsche emphasizes that the Dionysian is an experience of union with nature. The artistic nature of *Zarathustra* encourages the interpretation that Nietzsche primarily views the idea in fundamentally artistic manner, as the basis of an aesthetics of nature, conceived of as all of physical reality as a whole. Nietzsche’s discussion of the Dionysian in the later work certainly expands beyond the scope of the production of artworks. However, for Nietzsche, his descriptions always strongly suggest that his conception of the Dionysian never loses the sense of a transformative, aesthetic experience. In fact, Nietzsche, particularly in *Ecce Homo* above, describes the experience in terms of powerful aesthetic interactions with the natural world in which one emerges with an affirmative outlook towards the entire cosmos. In his published writings, from the thought-experiment at *GS* 341 to his commentary on the powerful aesthetic experience at Lake Silvaplana Nietzsche consistently views the idea as either the ultimate test, or expression, of affirming the whole of reality. Nietzsche’s autobiographical account offers a memorable and potent testament to aesthetic experiences of the natural world. In fact, the affirmative experience is only grounded in these particular moments of aesthetic joy. The

\(^{394}\) EH: “Why I Write such Good Books,” “Thus Spoke Zarathustra,” 1
affirmation of these particular moments, inextricably bound up with ugliness and suffering in the
nexus of fate, prompts saying yes to everything as it is. Nietzsche implies then that not every
moment can inspire the affirmative mode. Viewed inversely, the idea could be utilized not only
to evaluate the aesthetic qualities of a particular environment, but also the underlying joy-
producing forces at work in such an environment.

Nietzsche need not waver any from his long-term positive ethical vision. The spiritual-
aesthetic experience of die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen operates as a distinct mode of
experience, a notion, in its primary significance as given in his publications, wholly divorced
from the implementation or endorsement of any given ethical or unethical practice. At this
deeper plane of existence, Nietzsche does accept even that which he detests and longs to advance
beyond in his long-term commitments. The ultimate affirmative experience that Nietzsche
describes in Ecce Homo and artistically celebrates in Zarathustra certainly produces a tension in
the active implementation of any particular goal for the future. However, charitably construed,
this is merely a psychological tension Nietzsche gladly accepts and need not imply any outright
contradiction in his overall axiological program. If die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen primarily
denotes an aesthetic experience then it need not rule out a set of axiological and ethical positions
that Nietzsche defends elsewhere. Acampora’s worry then is plausibly addressed, i.e.
Nietzsche’s aesthetic emphasis on affirmation need not limit him in any way in making other
types of assessments about human affairs. Nonetheless, the emphasis on affirmation can inform
axiological and ethical assessments. Nietzsche does reevaluate traditional attempts to restrict

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395 Nolt, in his evaluation of the notion, notes fragments where Nietzsche does develop potentially ethical, social, or
political uses of the idea (Nolt (2007) 313; WP: 417, 462, 1053-56, 1058, and KGW V2 471, 11 [338]). Nietzsche
certainly in his notes developed many types of uses for the notion, e.g. flirting with understanding it as a
cosmological doctrine, but these remain confined to the Nachlass, whereas he utilizes the idea consistently in the
published writings.
and eliminate certain inevitable expressions and discharges of force. Nietzsche ultimately calls for the most comprehensive attempt to incorporate as much as possible of every natural human force for the creation of a life-enhancing future environment. The aesthetic, affirmative experience of particular moments of one’s engagement with one’s surroundings certainly prompts a reconsideration of the environmental conditions that inform quotidian concerns. Del Caro, then, rightly emphasizes the connection of the revaluation of the quotidian and die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen.

I do not take my comments here to exhaust the interpretative possibilities regarding a work as elusive and manifold as Zarathustra. However, I contend that situating the text in the overall context of Nietzsche’s self-assessments and continual commitments--- particularly concerning the future and the natural world--- can assist in plausibly and charitably developing a picture in which Nietzsche gives artistic expression to something that both honors and surpasses those commitments at some deeper level of engagement with the world.

V. Revisiting the Issues

I now return to the interpretative issues introduced at the beginning of this chapter and see how this exposition has shed light on each one.

First, Nietzsche evinces some minimal moral consideration beyond the human species (e.g. his concern for higher culture to outgrow animal cruelty, his consideration of the perspectives of sacrificed animal victims, or the transient life of a butterfly, and his concern about how human beings relate to the natural world as a whole) and into the distant future. He
entertains the perspectives of non-human species and directs nearly all his ethical attention to the distant future. Moreover, Nietzsche firmly rejects axiological anthropocentrism. His critique of religion and morality focuses primarily on ways in which previous moral systems denigrate the value and meaning of not only human nature, but life itself, and the whole of the natural world. Nietzsche’s criticisms and his views on values and morality then not only appear compatible with his critique of axiological anthropocentrism but as deeply intertwined in his overall philosophical project.

There is little evidence to suggest that Nietzsche views power itself *simpliciter* as his axiological criterion. He primarily discusses the notion of *der Wille zur Macht*, for example, in the context of describing and interpreting the natural world free from previous metaphysical and moral values (see chapter 2). Nietzsche does utilize his overall naturalistic commitments (certainly involving discussions of power) in his critique of morality, particularly in the *Genealogy*. Nietzsche, however, pervasively articulates more nuanced and particular axiological commitments. I have referred to them in this account as his emphasis on higher culture and the revaluation of the quotidian, qualified by the recognition of values beyond the human species, i.e. axiological non-anthropocentrism. Nietzsche calls for the future enhancement and integration of distinctive cognitive and creative capacities within the organic totality of humanity as a whole. Moreover, he accords particular significance to the quotidian aspects of this development. Nietzsche, though taking this development of the human species as his primary focus, qualifies his views on the relationship of the human species to the rest of the natural world. Nietzsche doubtless sees such a development as the active implementation of the natural outgrowth of power, but power seen not merely as exploitation but as abundance, creativity, gift, etc. Moreover, Nietzsche recognizes other forces of power beyond the human species. Even if
Nietzsche viewed power itself as the sole criterion of value, this would not imply axiological anthropocentrism.

Nietzsche then should not be understood as affirming a long-term anthropocentrism. Nietzsche, given his critique of axiological anthropocentrism and his suggestive application of a conception of species welfare to evaluate humanity, possibly presupposes a species-centric version of biocentric holism. Since the phrase “eco-natural holism” is vague and underdetermines this position it should be discarded even despite Nietzsche's own lack of precision. Nietzsche, as Parkes argued, does often occupy a perspective “beyond biocentrism” but perhaps only as a part of his deeper, spiritual-aesthetic mode of affirmation. Some kind of conception of species welfare appears intermittently in his writings from “Schopenhauer as Educator” to *The Anti-Christ*. Unfortunately, Nietzsche never explicitly develops his conception in any precise detail. Nonetheless, he does suggest that his presupposed conception involves certain specific features. For instance, during the early period, Nietzsche thinks that a species does better to the extent that it produces individual exemplars of its given type. Nietzsche, then, later in *The Anti-Christ*, appears to assess a type not merely by the possession of its particular set of faculties, but the ways in which the set of faculties and abilities manifest themselves instinctually in a unified, integrated organic totality. Individual exemplars then fully express in a healthy, integrated manner the total spectrum of the potential instincts of that species. Nietzsche though never explicitly develops his possibly presupposed conception beyond these general features. Furthermore, these two desiderata of this potential conception, appear in widely separated contexts in Nietzsche’s overall corpus. Attributing to him some fully fleshed out coherent ideal of species welfare, though plausible, is by no means textually decisive. Perhaps this is why Storey, in his plausible interpretation of Nietzsche as a hierarchical biocentrist,
refrains from addressing the individualism-holism issue. In conclusion, given Nietzsche’s critique of axiological anthropocentrism, his emphasis on life, both human and non-human, and his constant theme of viewing values in a hierarchical complex over and above any form of equality, Storey’s phrase “hierarchical biocentrism” probably best captures Nietzsche’s outlook. As we have seen, Nietzsche does not coherently spell out whether or not he views biological value primarily as explained in terms of organisms or species, though his comments do tend to suggest the latter, albeit without precision or sufficient explanation.

The reader of Zarathustra then encounters in the figure of der Übermensch a watchword for Nietzsche’s long-term ethical project. Such a figure probably artistically denotes an individual exemplar of the human species, but not conceived exemplary by the standards of traditional morality. Nietzsche, in Ecce Homo, spoke of the “constitutional excellence” of this figure, perhaps alluding to the positive feature of integrating the most distinctive and recently developed abilities, capacities, and faculties of the human species in a fully integrated instinctual manner. This certainly involves physical health, the cognitive capacities to discern the hard truths of reality, and the creative ability to employ them in an aesthetic, affirmative way. Since Nietzsche associates his brutal, honest confrontation with truth with the rejection of metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism, and der Übermensch “brings meaning to the Earth” there is good reason to suspect that this figure, at the very least, does not put any special weight on the value of being a human as opposed to another form of life. Nonetheless, the figure should probably be understood as the product of cultural evolution and so different from other forms of life. If Nietzsche intended to make this figure something more akin to a heroic champion of non-human species, Nietzsche failed to communicate this effectively. However, Ecce Homo

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396 I owe this observation to John Nolt.
does make clear that he sees this figure as one who completely faces and even celebrates the terrible and questionable aspects of the natural world.

Such a figure then doubtless can, like Nietzsche at the pyramidal rock upon the alpine Lake Silvaplana, undergo a transformative aesthetic experience in nature. This experience enables a complete and total affirmation of reality. No one likely can occupy this perspective constantly, and perhaps that is why Nietzsche associates it with the joy of a very particular, treasured moment within his own life, a climax experience unlikely to often be duplicated. For Nietzsche, his ideas of life-affirmation, *amor fati*, and *der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* are tightly associated with the single moment, an exception of joy in the midst of the inherent pain and suffering of bodily existence.397 Charitably then, Nietzsche likely views his long-term naturalistic ethical commitments that underlie his critique of morality as distinct, though not wholly separable, from this unique and exceptional moment of affirmation. Nietzsche, then, tragically affirms the engulfing forces that overwhelm the exceptional expressions of discharged energy in the culmination of new organic types, but for all that, promotes the future development of such exceptions as both uniquely valuable and worth every bit of consideration.

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397 Keiji, 53-7
Chapter 4: Conclusion: An Environmental Nietzsche

I conclude, first, by arguing that Nietzsche cannot fully be understood without the conceptual resources of contemporary environmental philosophy, and second, that Nietzsche does warrant the attention of contemporary environmental philosophers even if his philosophy can only make minimal constructive contributions to applied environmental ethics.

I. Interpreting Nietzsche with the Conceptual Resources of Environmental Philosophy

Nietzsche, arguably more than any other philosopher, and perhaps more than any other figure in history with the exception of founders of religions, has already been misappropriated by opposing political agendas and misunderstood by readers. I contend that this study shows his axiological and ethical views, both negative and positive, cannot fully be understood without the conceptual resources of contemporary environmental philosophy.

Nietzsche’s critique of morality is so far-reaching that it easily alienates many ethicists. A recurring question in the interpretation of Nietzsche has been whether or not he offers a positive ethical position by which he supplants all previous moral systems, and also does not fall victim to his radical critique. Nietzsche, in his habit of overstatement, no doubt appears to walk into many contradictions in his views on axiology and morality. Fleshing out the presuppositions and stance from which Nietzsche appears to criticize every available live option (at least in his own day) requires the reconstruction of some bare and basic minimal commitment to some platform of axiological and ethical commitment. Nietzsche himself recognized as much, often discussing how a philosopher may carry out a critique of morality only through its own
“self-sublimation” i.e. applying its foundational assumptions against its conclusions in the creation of a new perspective. Intellectual integrity and rigorous epistemic standards (often equated with scientific methodology) centrally inform his critique. The first part of the “task” of Nietzsche concerning nature proceeds exactly along this front. Taking up this task involves throwing off the traditional metaphysical and moral categories utilized to interpret and assess nature. For Nietzsche, as my account in chapter 2 reveals, this centrally involves the shedding of metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism. The issue of anthropocentrism, however, was not really precisely demarcated, analyzed, and debated until the rise of contemporary environmental philosophy. This means that a core element of Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature has been missed or either dismissed flatly as rhetorical excesses of misanthropy.

Moreover, the underlying axiological and ethical commitments comprising Nietzsche’s orientation towards naturalism--- which implies his rejection of a distinct moral realm via his application of rigorous epistemic skepticism to moral phenomena--- are likely to be missed without a basic orientation towards the debated concepts and positions of environmental ethics. Once again, the debate and analysis regarding not only axiological, but also ethical, anthropocentrism assists in the explanation of why Nietzsche rejects (during his time) all previous axiological and moral orientations, as I contend for in chapter 3. Also, Nietzsche faults morality repeatedly (including utilitarianism) for failing to appreciate how the successful implementation of those values through complete compliance might affect the future development of the human species itself. Even if a reader rejects that Nietzsche extends axiological and moral consideration beyond the human species at all, his stark emphasis on the future of the human species benefits from understanding the issues of future generations and the meaning and value of species welfare. Perhaps future studies may more fully situate Nietzsche
with respect to his views on animal suffering and whether or not he in any way recognizes the value and moral considerability of individuals (both human and non-human) independent of their belonging in a holistic organic system. An acquaintance, then, with the conceptual contours of the individualism-holism debate might assist in interpreting Nietzsche’s concern for individual exemplars despite his refusal to recognize the moral validity of rights. For if Nietzsche prizes individual exemplars as particularly valuable specimens for the future of a given form of life, or an evolutionary lineage, then situating his views with respect to the discussion of individualism and holism could possibly make his ideas clearer and more accessible to contemporary philosophers.

II. Nietzsche’s Potential Contributions to Future Environmental Philosophy

Nietzsche’s philosophical contributions to environmental philosophy can be divided into four main aspects. First, Nietzsche stimulates environmental assessments of religion by inaugurating his own in his critique of Christianity. Second, Nietzsche encourages the critical exploration of philosophical understandings of nature, including interpretations of science, concerning the issues of anthropomorphism and metaphysical anthropocentrism. Third, Nietzsche anticipates issues presently discussed in environmental aesthetics, discussed below, and exemplifies the significance of the aesthetic appreciation of the natural world, his own experiences informing the very core of his philosophy. Fourth, Nietzsche provides a test case
model for assessing an illiberal long-term environmental ethics. I will explain below and defend the significance of each of these aspects.

First, Nietzsche invites critical assessments of religions based on their original underlying attitudes towards nature and warns how ostensible religious and moral positions may mask such attitudes. Nietzsche faults Christianity for distorting both our views of the natural world and human nature. Christianity does this by positing false concepts of reality and value which ultimately express a metaphysical and axiological anthropocentric outlook. These false concepts denigrate everything designated as “nature”: the bodily passions and desires, the natural processes of life, and the cold, indifferent reality of impersonal forces throughout the universe. Christianity tends to place more value on everything removed from the immanent, natural world (e.g. heaven over this earth, the immortal soul over the body, eternal rest over the ceaseless natural competition of life). Nietzsche also strongly associates animal cruelty with religious practices, especially the ancient rituals of sacrifice. By focusing on the implicit meanings of the central concepts of a given religion, in his case, Christianity, Nietzsche exemplifies what an environmental assessment of religious systems may involve. He focuses not merely on how certain practices might affect life beyond the human species, but puts even more weight on how the central belief system itself fosters a view of reality that may or may not encourage a meaningful relationship with the natural environment.

Future assessments, then, of Lynn White, Jr’s thesis--- i.e., Western Christianity (taken to exclude the Eastern Orthodox tradition and particular exceptions such as St. Francis of Assisi) is primarily responsible for the beliefs and attitudes that gave rise to the current ecological crisis---and its critics, must take into account Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity. (Arguably, this
perhaps should be extended to Schopenhauer, too. These assessments need not devolve into a blame game. Evaluation of this thesis can provide valuable insights into how beliefs about reality, meaning, and value may or may not affect the physical environment and our relationship to it. Nietzsche not only historically anticipates White’s thesis, as Hallman earlier noted, but he also develops an account of this that stretches throughout his entire career. Nietzsche advances several claims and “psychological” analyses relevant to the assessment of a possible correlation between core Christian fundamentals and the denigration of the natural environment. This in turn can lead to a more fundamental project of understanding the peculiar human institution of religion and how it either encourages or discourages a meaningful, and non-anthropocentric, relationship to the natural world.

Second, Nietzsche invites critical assessment of anthropomorphism and metaphysical anthropocentrism, and whether or not this impacts axiological and ethical reflection and practice. Nietzsche does not view any assessment of reality as axiologically neutral. These concerns speak to a more broad philosophical concern beyond a more narrow focus on religion, or even one particular religious tradition. In fact, these concerns may or may not apply to the given body of scientific knowledge, the interpretation of that knowledge, and beliefs inferred from this knowledge. Could pagan animism, or views of nature as divine, etc. produce attitudes and practices more friendly to the environment than views based on current scientific knowledge? Nietzsche opens the door to an ambitious project of assessing any and every conceivable view for its environmental impact, or at least its impact on how humans may or may not value the natural world beyond their own species. Nietzsche does not give a detailed and precise argument for a correlation between anthropomorphic and anthropocentric views of reality and axiological

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398 Varner, 209
commitments and ethical practices. However, Nietzsche’s critiques of how human beings view nature are directed both at metaphysical and axiological anthropocentrism, both epistemically suspect and the product of a natural tendency towards advancing one’s own conditions for life. Nietzsche then invites critical philosophical reflection on the axiological and ethical impacts of views of reality characterized by either conceptual or metaphorical anthropomorphism, or metaphysical anthropocentrism.399

Third, Nietzsche anticipates issues presently discussed in the newly emerging field of environmental aesthetics and exemplifies how a powerful aesthetic appreciation of nature may impact philosophical and artistic production. The present work focused primarily on axiological and ethical issues, and the potential impact on these by metaphysical and epistemic views. However, Nietzsche’s entire oeuvre presents an untapped goldmine for the environmental aesthetician. I see this potential contribution as developing in three directions. First, Nietzsche’s commentary on issues of aesthetics throughout his entire career encourages reflection on the relationship, similarities, and differences between the aesthetics of art on the one hand, and the aesthetics of nature on the other.400 This is an important issue in environmental aesthetics.401 Nietzsche is a rich source for entertaining this question. Second, Nietzsche, both in his own life, and in his works, demonstrates the significance of environmental aesthetic appreciation on

399 Also, recall that Hallman attributed to Nietzsche a critical stance towards epistemological anthropocentrism. Analytic discussions of environmental philosophy will probably ignore this notion as a non-starter, arguing that this problem has little to no application. However, continental environmental philosophers might think that Nietzsche’s “perspectivism” might have the potential to invite further critical reflection on whether or not human cognition, and philosophical work on cognition, knowledge, etc. might unintentionally favor the human perspective on the world over and above the perspectives of non-human animals. It’s at least worth bearing in mind that the Pyrrhonist skeptics thought that the variance in perception among humans and non-human animals, and between the animals themselves, was the first mode facilitating a suspension of judgment on issues of metaphysics and so avoiding any kind of metaphysical dogmatism. See Outlines of Skepticism xiv “The Ten Modes” [40]-[78].
401 Drenthen and Keulartz, 2-4
everyday life and on exceptional moments of profound personal and philosophical
significance.\textsuperscript{402} Nietzsche gives ample testament to this throughout his writings, particularly in
his autobiographical reflections, and I have specifically touched upon his personal reflections on
his transformative and productive experience at Lake Silvaplana.\textsuperscript{403} Third, building off the
second direction, Nietzsche provides numerous test cases for environmental aestheticians
because many passages in his writings reflect and comment on particular aesthetic experiences of
the natural environment. Some of these, as mentioned with regards to the second direction,
concern the impact of the environment on his own personal life, including his artistic and
philosophical production. However, many passages offer direct reflection and judgment on the
aesthetics of the experienced environment itself.\textsuperscript{404} These examples can be utilized and critically
assessed in developed accounts of environmental aesthetic experience. These accounts may
touch upon what produces or explains the aesthetic experience or whether or not certain
experiences of the environment reflect more or less of the aesthetic qualities by which to
aesthetically assess a particular environment. Nietzsche offers reflections on both natural and
artificial landscapes, so his examples may also provide a rich source on the questions associated
with the differences between wilderness and human constructed environments.

Fourthly and finally, Nietzsche provides a test case for assessing an illiberal long-term
environmental ethics. Such a test case may prove extremely valuable in the years ahead.
Assessments of illiberal views may become philosophically pressing as the increasing ecological
crisis of the planet may challenge the compatibility of liberalism, i.e. a range of philosophical

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\textsuperscript{402} The influence of particular aesthetic environments on Nietzsche’s production is the primary topic of \textit{The Good European: Nietzsche’s Work Sites in Word and Image} by David Farel Krell and Donald L. Bates.


\textsuperscript{404} See, e.g., HAH I: 628; WS: 115, 201, 295, 338; D: 427, 513; GS: 15, 17, 281, 291
positions and political movements concerned with social relations between persons conceived as free and equal\textsuperscript{405}, with solving the issues of consumption and population. What I say here might suggest that liberalism and environmentalism could be on a potential collision course with one another. This may sound like an overstatement and needlessly pessimistic about the future prospects of liberalism to handle the current ecological crisis. In the more immediate context, we might focus instead on whether or not solving the crisis requires a stronger centralized rule to prevent environmental catastrophe and whether or not Nietzsche’s advancement of “higher culture”, qualified by axiological non-anthropocentrism and concerned with quotidian aspects of the environment, favored such a political approach.\textsuperscript{406}

Nonetheless, Nietzsche’s relationship to both liberalism and environmentalism hardly seems to be conclusively solved. On the question of liberalism taken alone, future interpretations might take up the question of why Nietzsche becomes increasingly hostile to liberalism in the later work despite, at the very least, his much less hostile assessments of democracy and central concerns of liberalism (e.g. disparities of wealth and the exploitation of labor) during the middle period. My account focuses on the environmental upshot of his positive ethical vision. I certainly emphasized continuity in the main aspects of his position between the two periods in his career. Nietzsche never wavers from the project of developing a long-term goal for the future of humanity. He continues to evince consequentialist commitments emphasizing the development of higher culture, qualified by axiological non-anthropocentrism, with a particular emphasis on reassessing the meaning, value, and practice of everyday life as opposed to non-quotidian concerns. However, I do acknowledge that Nietzsche definitely shifted his thinking on

\textsuperscript{405} (modified) Rawls, 29
\textsuperscript{406} Thanks to John Nolt for the suggestion to focus the issue on these terms.
the macro-structures of human society itself. His progressivist comments on wealth and labor completely drop out of the picture whereas his critical reflections on democracy become stringent denunciations. The interpretative picture then that emerges is that though Nietzsche never abandons his long-term environmental ethics (which he modifies between the early and middle period) Nietzsche does evince different postures towards liberalism.

This interpretative picture then raises a fruitful interpretative and philosophical question. Do Nietzsche’s fundamental commitments to a long-term environmental ethics fit better with his progressivist direction in the middle period or his extreme anti-egalitarianism in the late period, and so how might this influence contemporary discussions? At the very least, given the current understanding of social and political philosophy and the gains already won by social justice—e.g. the civil rights and women’s movements, particularly in the 1960s— which guards against the arbitrary favoritism of one group over others, only the middle period has any chance of being taken seriously or mobilized in discussions of the long-term. Despite his criticisms of anti-Semitism and German nationalism, the later Nietzsche is all too willing to contemplate and even endorse political options associated with the atrocities of the 20th century, e.g. wars with unprecedented destruction, suppression of civil freedoms, eugenic measures in controlling the population, etc.

Of the contributions that an interpretative assessment of Nietzsche’s environmental outlook might produce none perhaps could impact future work in environmental ethics and by extension, politics more, than this issue.407 The anthropogenic climate crisis is fueled by the

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407 Nietzsche’s emphasis on the development of higher culture, and managing the earth as a whole, in the middle period, likely had an effect on his shift to illiberalism in the later period because of the difficulties of squaring these goals with democratic procedures. Recall that Nietzsche thought that the development of higher culture transcended political objectives.
consumption of goods and services produced by the burning of fossil fuels coupled with the continually increasing numbers of consumers. Liberalism accords the utmost axiological priority to the freedom and equality of persons. Only humans fit the bill for personhood in most, if not all, liberal conceptions. Various conceptions of liberalism entail consumptive and reproductive freedom, and current constitutional expressions of liberalism place no limits on these freedoms. The unchecked proliferation of these freedoms to developing countries seeking the same standards of living and political freedoms of Western nations no doubt will worsen the already dire state of the global environment. It seems probable then that the concerns of environmentalism (particularly expressions informed by axiological and ethical non-anthropocentrism) are on a collision course with the priorities of liberalism. There are both legitimate potential solutions and daunting worries about the extent to which liberalism can accommodate the pressing concerns of environmentalism. Can liberalism do without free-market capitalism, its axiological anthropocentric presuppositions, or reproductive freedom? Does environmentalism require axiological non-anthropocentrism and to what extent must its objectives honor liberal principles? No doubt the possible positons on these questions are legion.

I have argued that Nietzsche’s own enduring position is characterized by long-term consequentialism and axiological non-anthropocentrism. Nietzsche certainly thinks these projected ethical concerns of the future outweigh liberal priorities on securing the conditions of freedom and equality among persons. However, the progressivism in Nietzsche’s middle period shares enough common ground with contemporary liberal concerns --- great disparities in wealth is the most prominent example--- that liberal environmentalists with an eye on the long-term future have reason enough to heed Nietzsche’s voice.

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408 Nolt (2015), 24-8
Nietzsche, at various times throughout his career to various degrees, expanded axiological and ethical discussion beyond the human species and into the distant future. A philosopher with his historical stature and influence, who exemplifies such a perspective, warrants attention in a time such as ours.


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