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# Loyalty to Nature: Royce's Latent Environmental Philosophy

Albert R. Spencer  
*Portland State University*

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**TITLE:** “Loyalty to Nature: Royce’s Latent Environmental Philosophy”

**ABSTRACT (95 words):** This article surveys recent attempts to articulate the latent environmental philosophy of Josiah Royce in order to orient it within the context of contemporary methodologies of environmental ethics. It then articulates a unique perspective of loyalty to nature founded on a Roycean appeal to moral perfectionism and his response to the egoism of Friedrich Nietzsche. As shall be demonstrated, loyalty to nature provides a novel pragmatic alternative to the anthropocentric-biocentric axiology and a richer more comprehensive view of humanity’s relationship to fellow natural beings, the land, the planet, and nature itself.

**TEXT (8668 (body)/9425 (inc. notes & references) words):**

This article surveys recent attempts to articulate the latent environmental philosophy of Josiah Royce (Selk 1977, Oppenheim 1999, Price 1999, Bell 1999, Minter 2001, and Brunson 2016) and assess the merits and flaws of these attempts. It will then orient Royce's latent environmental philosophy within the context of contemporary methodologies of environmental ethics in the hopes of demonstrating Royce's relevance and potential to these engagements of current ecological crises. It will conclude by articulating a unique perspective of loyalty to nature founded on a Roycean appeal to moral perfectionism, his response to the egoism of Friedrich Nietzsche, and a blending of the sources presented at the outset. As shall be demonstrated, loyalty to nature provides a novel pragmatic alternative to the anthropocentric-biocentric axiology and a richer more comprehensive view of humanity's relationship to fellow natural beings, the land, the planet, and nature itself.

Loyalty to the Land: Royce's Latent Environmental Philosophy:

Presently, only a handful of sustained analyses of Royce's latent environmental philosophy exist. Eugene E. Selk (1977) contends Royce’s theories of the self, loyalty, and community provide resources for an environmental ethic based on obligations to future generations. Meanwhile, the most interesting sources are in a special volume of *The Personalist Forum* on "The 'Conception of God' Debate and the Relevance of Royce" (1999). In it, Frank M. Oppenheim discusses the general influence of naturalism on Royce's understanding of spirituality, Thomas W. Price explains how Royce's panpsychism allows for natural beings to participate in Royce's social philosophy, and Jason M. Bell argues that loyalty to nature entails loyalty to nature because "Environmentalism is a *loyalty*, that is to say, to the relationships that exist, have

existed, and will exist between the personal beings in nature... and it is a recognition that these relationships form a community of which we are a part” (“The World and Its Selves” 171). More recently, Ben A. Minter (2001) appeals to Royce's concept of the wise province by highlighting the work of Benton MacKaye, specifically his vision of the Appalachian Trail and his contributions to the American wilderness idea and most recently Daniel J. Brunson (2016) argues that sustainability is a consequence of Royce's moral vision.

Eugene E. Selk (1977) initiates the first examination of Royce’s environmental philosophy by insisting Royce’s beloved community serves as a robust example of what Martin Goulding describes as a moral community bound by a social idealism, rather than merely contract or reciprocity (“Towards an Environmental Ethic” 254-255). Initially, our obligation to the community and, by extension to future generations, springs from our obligations to our self. Thus Selk begins by focusing on Royce’s understanding of the relationship between the self and community and highlights three vital components, specifically Royce’s “(1) theory of ‘contrast-effect,’ (2) the essential voluntarism of the self, and (3) the self as a time process” (256). All of these components support obligations for future generations. We become who we are through our contrast with others, including those of past and future generations, and our mature self emerges when we voluntarily commit to “some unifying and organizing principle,... a personal ideal or life plan” and the temporal nature of the self requires us to honor the traditions of the past community members and to worry about our impact on subsequent members (256-258). Thus, a true community obtains when the members are able to extend the community through time by working “constantly on improving the understanding between its members” and share a common past and future as a result (259-260). These actions produce rich communities that “display continuity and coherence” and allow their members to achieve “full personhood” (261).

Some of the most interesting work on the subject appears in a special issue of *The Personalist Forum* on “The ‘Conception of God’ Debate and the Relevance of Royce,” where several critics highlight the influence of nature on Royce’s thought. Frank M. Oppenheim (1999) asserts that Royce’s “ethico-rational spirituality” is grounded in a naturalism that emphasizes the importance of human transaction with nature. According to Oppenheim, Royce’s spirituality “embraced naturalism’s view of the human person as an evolving organism” yet, resisted “any naturalism that excludes a transcendent Spirit” (“The Middle Royce’s Naturalistic Spirituality” 131). This concern emerges from Royce’s “keen opposition toward nominalism and its consequent materialistic naturalism” and it informs Royce’s development during his middle period, particularly his Gifford Lectures on natural religion, i.e. *The World and the Individual* (1899)

(132-141). As a result, Royce constructs a form of spirituality that recognizes that the “human Self lives as an embodied biological organism, called to adapt to its changing environment” yet “presupposes that an immanent and transcendent Spirit is present and operating in the appeal-making, truth-seeking human Self, to give it light and to confirm its true judgements by Its co-witnessing to the finite, human Self” (“The Middle Royce’s Naturalistic Spirituality” 141-142; *The World as Will and the Individual*, Vol. 2 251-52).

In the same volume, Thomas W. Price (1999) presents an article that further explicates the influence of nature on Royce’s thoughts. He articulates a reading of Royce’s “social philosophy of nature” from the second series of Royce’s Gifford Lectures that alludes to the “possibility of social contact and communication with natural beings” (“The Appreciation of Natural Beings” 153). Price argues “This appreciative and speculative dimension of Royce’s idealism suggests that not only do we share the character of mind with our fellow natural beings but that we should also treat them as ends in themselves rather than means to our own ends,” and therefore “offers us a vision of living conscious meaningful nature... that we *can* and *should* come to view natural beings as fellow conscious beings, beings endowed with selfhood and intelligence” (154). While he admits that Royce does promote the “pragmatic manipulation of nature” and that *The World and The Individual* is not a “proto-environmental text” because the “obvious and irrevocable destruction of the natural world was just beginning to register in Royce’s day, and it is by no means obvious that it was registering to Royce,” Price quotes Royce’s hope that we “unlearn that atrocious Philistinism of our whole race which supposes that Nature has no worthier goal than producing a man” and his suggestion that “beings of other consciousness and time spans different from our own ‘whose rationality, whose dignity, whose significance, whose power of will, whose aptness to pursue ideals, might be equal to or far above our own...’” as promising a richer relationship with nature (*The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 231 & 228; “The Appreciation of Natural Beings” 155).

According to Price, Royce's acceptance of evolution combined with his "social theory of being" suggests "man and nature are not only related on a continuum of internal relation... but that the course of being per se and, thereby, the course of nature is moving towards a kind of 'universal Sociology'" where "we review our relations with natural beings and in particular reassess these relations in terms of the appreciative categories of respect and sympathy" (*Studies of Good and Evil* 206; “The Appreciation of Natural Beings” 155). He asserts that Royce's idealism entails "nature is the expression of mental life," thus he "characterizes natural beings as not only social but as having conscious minds, and these minds are said to be reaching out through time with purpose, significance, and, above all, selfhood" (“The

Appreciation of Natural Beings” 156). Just as we project the existence of minds onto other humans, there is nothing in Royce's metaphysics to prevent extending the existence of mind to other living animals and plants, and even to inorganic beings and processes. As a result, "all beings, whatever their natural manifestation may be, are conscious minds spread out through time" and the difference is not one of kind, e.g. rationality, but of the "span of this presence and its accompanying gestures" (157). Thus, it is our temporal limitations that inhibit our ability to communicate with other natural beings and to recognize their consciousness because "What we witness when we encounter and engage a fellow natural being is the fragment of self, a moment in the conscious life of a self, a slice or phase of consciousness better witnessed by considering the life span of the species rather than this or that individual" (*The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 241; “The Appreciation of Natural Beings” 157).

While Price admits Royce probably saw our temporal limitations as insurmountable, he is thrilled by these panpsychistic possibilities and argues that Royce both overestimated the temporal incongruity between ourselves and natural beings and provided resources for overcoming any apparent incommensurability. Price references William James' influence on Royce's philosophy of time, specifically their shared notion of the "specious present" where the present moment is experienced "as a serial whole, within which there are observed temporal differences of former and latter" (*The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 122) and the possibility of experiencing time as "world-embracing" where "this present, whether it is the present second, or the present century, or the present geological period, it is... truly a divisible and connected whole region of time, within which a succession of events take place[...] within whose span the whole universe of present events is comprised." (*The World and the Individual*, Vol. 2, 128; “The Appreciation of Natural Beings” 160) This world-embracing implies we experience time as both an objective and quantitative succession of measurable changes as well as a subjective and qualitative perception of events. Our subjective experience of time is plastic and can be stretched to span periods of time that our finite lives could not experience objectively, e.g. imagining historical events or geological processes. This "spandedness" of time is crucial for Royce's philosophy of loyalty in general since the individual develops her identity through loyalty to a community and/or cause that transcends her temporal limitations and, clearly, individuals can also develop these spanned relationships with natural beings. Price uses the example of his relationship to the oak tree in his front yard where his life span and the tree's inhibit their ability to communicate but do not altogether prevent meaningful transaction because "Royce maintains that the self-manifesting presence of the oak is an act of communication on the part of the oak tree or the oak species even if we have a very vague idea about its inner life

and the language it uses to discourse" and "Presumably the same could be said of animals, insects, rivers, clouds, and perhaps the whole planet" ("The Appreciation of Natural Beings" 160-162).

With the possibility of communication established through the overcoming of incongruent time via spandedness achieved, Price articulates his own vision of community with natural beings. Communing with nature requires two things: first we must develop a "deeper appreciation between we human beings and all other natural beings" and second we must recognize that "we can learn from them, that their presence alone is a communicative act, that perhaps some opening and shared communicative space is not only possible but actual, and that there is some possibility of experiencing their inner lives and personhood" (162). Price describes this process as follows:

The quantitative limit of temporal span is a limit of our attention to facts but it is not necessarily a limitation on our appreciative attention to values and affections like beauty, love, care, and sympathy. I suggest that the convergence of human beings and natural beings in the pervasive character of social being... implies that in the mode of appreciation, we share not quantity and measure but pathos with nature... we must strive to lengthen not our attention span but to attain *sympathos* with intelligence, a synthesis of feeling... Only the transposition of our affective-appreciative life into nature will open up the possibilities of making contact with natural beings. (163)

Conversely, Royce fails to recognize these possibilities because when he "looks to encounter natural beings socially, he invokes not the world of appreciation... but the world of description" which "veils the internal relations of the present and thereby prevents the intrinsically valuable world of natural beings from affecting a deeper register of our own social nature" (163-164). Without developing this subjective appreciation of nature, we, like Royce, are more likely to reduce natural beings to measure and commodity rather than viewing them as members of our social community.

Finally, Price argues Royce comes closest to recognizing nature as social in his epistemological arguments against solipsism. According to Price, Royce argues that "External reality is a function of our belief in our fellow human beings" because "our involvement with one another leads us to believe that we are each conscious finite minds because other human beings present us with meaning different from our own... [they] are the source of new and novel ideas that do not spring from our subjectivity" (164). Likewise, Royce extends this argument to human bodies since they are "instruments of social communication" and consequently to the "rest of physical nature" (165) because if "one's fellow is real, the whole of the phenomenal nature from which his phenomenal presence is continuous must be real in the same general fashion" (*Studies of Good and Evil*, 228). Price concludes by saying that "To be real in this sense is to be a finite

conscious being," thus all of nature possesses finite consciousness and waits "for the one who will question it and open the lines of communication" ("The Appreciation of Natural Beings" 166).

Jason M. Bell (1999) builds upon the frameworks created by Oppenheim and Price by claiming Royce's loyalty to loyalty requires loyalty to nature. Like Selk, Bell begins with Royce's theory of personhood, specifically that an individual develops her identity through her membership in and participation with a community. Loyalty binds individuals and communities together and at last "unify[s] the self with the world" ("The World and Its Selves" 169). Because individual loyalties conflict and disparate communities conflict over different loyalties, we must ultimately be loyalty to loyalty as a means of arbitrating conflicting loyalties and because we must recognize our own fallibilism, i.e. that other individuals and communities may, in the past, present, or future, be more successful at achieving the Great Community (169-170).

Bell argues this philosophy of loyalty requires loyalty to the "environmental cause" as follows:

I will define the "environmental cause" as a commitment to the continued health of the relationships that exist in nature (the totality of all personal beings in the world) and among individual natural beings, and an opposition to plans that would undermine the breadth and depth of these relationships. Environmentalism is a loyalty, that is to say, to the relationships that exist, have existed, and will exist between the personal beings in nature (and indeed, it is loyalty to the person of nature itself), and it is a recognition that these relationships form a community of which we are a part. (171)

Bell goes even further saying that the central problem both environmentalists and the philosophy of loyalty hope to address is identical: "how can humans be rid of selfish desires so that they are not injurious to larger community?" (171). Thus, loyalty to loyalty requires loyalty to nature and if we are not, we risk the "moral suicide" of our own extinction in the long run and undermine the loyalties active in nature in the present (171-172).<sup>1</sup>

With this connection between loyalty to loyalty and loyalty to nature established, Bell refurbishes Royce's philosophy of loyalty from an ecological perspective. First, Bell agrees with Price's suggestion that the "narrow, human quantification of time is actually a disloyalty that prevents persons with different life spans from communicating with one another" and that overcoming this limited temporal perspective, i.e. selfishness, through loyalty to a being with a longer temporal perspective, whether a social or natural being, is necessary to become an ethical person ("The World and Its Selves" 173). Likewise, he sees Royce as consistent with environmental pragmatists Jim Cheney's & Anthony Weston's "Environmental Ethics as Environmental Etiquette" (1999) appeal that an "adequate environmental ethics should begin with ethics, rather than epistemology" because we are already enmeshed in a web of ecological, social, and, consequently, ethical relationships prior to our attempts to know the natural world ("The World and Its Selves" 174). This primacy of

ethics over epistemology overcomes the dominant anthropocentrism-biocentrism axiology in environmental ethics because first Royce's absolutism and panpsychism emphasize "there are no essential distinctions between any two finite beings" contra anthropocentrism. Second, Royce's emphasis on communal value for individual humans as well as natural beings undercuts the biocentric need to establish the intrinsic value of natural beings (174-176). Bell summarizes as follows:

As individuals, we represent a slice of time in an evolutionary processive community, and thus a person represents the values of individuals who preceded it and contains within itself the possibility of future individuals and future values. When we destroy a species or an ecosystem, we undermine loyalty in this communal sense. If we eliminate a species, we do not simply undermine the loyalties of that individual but also all that could have come from these loyalties. (176)

Thus, Royce's commitment to panpsychism and communal value helps us to see ourselves as existing in a web of natural loyalties and requires us to privilege our ethical responsibilities to our local ecosystems and ultimately to the biosphere.

After completing this ecological retrofit of Royce's philosophy of loyalty, Bell defines the criterion for applying loyalty to nature to environmental problems. First, we should not "interfere in the nonhuman world *solely* for the good of humans" because our actions may "undermine the loyal plans that nonhuman natural beings possess in their own communities" thus "*All human actions that have an impact on the natural world must support the plans, persons, communities, and loyalties of the natural world*" (177). Second, we must avoid absolute loyalties that undermine natural loyalties because we can only "*hope* that our cause will lead to good, but if it does not we want to be certain that other causes will be able to do good in our place" thus we have a responsibility to "harmonize apparent conflicting loyalties, and to remove the conflict of loyalties from the world, and to utilize even conflict, where it is inevitable, so as to further general loyalty" (*Philosophy of Loyalty* 85; "The World and Its Selves" 178). This desire for harmony should lead us to cooperate with one another and to "teach the ecological truth of the world and contradict the notion of individual supremacy" (179). Finally, Royce contends that our loyalties are most effective when most idealized, i.e. "when the goodness of a plan is understood to be applicable to communities wider than our own, when the cause will outlive even our own deaths," which Bell argues is best exemplified by communities "whose religion, mythology, and community have always recognized the dependence of the community on living nature" (179). He laments that this awareness of dependence is lacking in communities descended from European settler colonialism which "have mostly rejected mythology and replaced it with analytical, scientific understanding that is often not aware of its own dependence on the ideal world," however Royce's attentiveness to grief provides a valuable corrective (179). Idealization often occurs



through "loss and grief" and Bell reminds us that "Many environmental loyalists arrive at their devotion to nonnatural being because of grief that is experienced when species and ecosystems are made extinct through human interference" thus "devotion is strengthened even despite loss" and "even in loss the possibility for good" can be found (179).

Before concluding his argument, Bell addresses the problem of loyal killing. He admits "Humans often disloyally destroy each other, nonhuman species, and ecosystems," that "most killing of animals as currently carried out *is* disloyal to loyalty," and that consequently "many environmentalists doubt that it is possible to kill loyally" (180). In response, Bell contends that "the killing of a loyal creature can be loyally accomplished so long as the killing supports and does not permanently undermine the purposes of the community whose member will be killed" (180). Perhaps the problem of loyal killing cannot be ultimately resolved without voluntary human extinction, but Bell cites the natural predator-prey relationships that balance ecosystems as the most ideal example and insists that humans are "less in danger of killing disloyally when we attach personal significance to the killing," e.g. thanking the "spirit of the just-killed animal" by Native American hunters, the Christian tradition of saying "grace to thank their God for their meals," "free-range" meat, vegetarianism, and Jewish dietary laws (181). These strategies ameliorate the inevitable damage of human existence while supporting the loyalties within nature and allowing humans to pursue finite communal loyalties in balance with our idealized loyalty to nature. In conclusion, by "being loyal to loyalty, we cast our loyalty into the natural world-- beyond the needs and desires of humans considered alone, beyond, in fact, even the temporal span that the consciousness of our species possesses individually or corporately." Thus, "This theory requires us to respect the potentiality of infinite ideal value, and thus loyalty to this ideal value of nature in the present is obligatory for all who would be loyal in the present" as well as the "distant future... even if its actuality will not be experienced by any creature currently alive" (183).

Turning from Royce's philosophy of loyalty, Ben A. Minter constructs his environmental philosophy by appealing to Royce's concept of the wise province as exemplified by Benton MacKaye his vision of the Appalachian Trail and his contributions to the American wilderness idea. He argues that MacKaye's "pragmatic vision for wilderness conservation, a project supported through an appeal to the values of a reconstructed "indigenous" communal environment, owes much to the social philosophy of Josiah Royce, MacKaye's former teacher at Harvard" ("Wilderness and the Wise Province" 185). According to Minter, the influence of Royce is evident in MacKaye's "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning" (*Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, 1921) where he originally debuts his vision for what has become "one of the most culturally-valued and successful wilderness projects of the 20th century: a 2,100 mile

long Appalachian Trail running from Maine to Georgia." MacKaye adapted Royce's wise provincialism to envision a trail that would integrate the "institutional and cultural features of the human community with the natural landscape" ("Wilderness and the Wise Province" 186). Like Aldo Leopold, MacKaye saw conservation as an "ethical project" and, like Royce, "he significantly avoided the appeal to a set of moral goods ontologically and epistemologically removed from lived cultural experience" (187).

Minteer identifies Royce's concept of wise provincialism as articulated in his Phi Beta Kappa address at the University of Iowa as the most significant influence on MacKaye's environmental philosophy. In this address, Royce applies his philosophy of loyalty at the level of the local province and uses this "semantically rich concept" to negotiate the "interdependent relationship between local and global loyalties" in the face of rapid social change (188). Minteer cites the following excerpt as a definition:

For me, then, a province shall mean any one part of a national domain, which is geographically and socially, sufficiently unified to have a true consciousness of its own unity, to feel a pride in its own ideas and customs, and to possess a sense of its distinction from other parts of the country. And by the term "provincialism" I shall mean, first, the tendency of such a province to possess its own customs and ideals; secondly, the totality of these customs and ideal themselves; and thirdly, the love and pride which lead the inhabitants of a province to cherish as their own these traditions, beliefs, and aspirations. (Minteer 188, Royce *Basic Writings*, vol. 2, 1069)

Minteer insists Royce's "intriguing expression of the material manifestation of provincial goods also suggests an understanding of the close connections between community life and environmental quality" which Benton MacKaye shared as well as contemporary communitarian environmentalists like, Mark Sagoff (188).

According to Minteer, Royce saw wise provincialism as a means of ameliorating three emerging social problems that continue to this day and are increasingly associated with environmental philosophy: 1) the "social alienation" of "both foreign immigrants and domestic 'wanderers,'" 2) the "leveling tendency" of both American life in particular and globalism in general whereby provincial cultures are "run through the homogenizing meat grinder of modern civilization," and 3) the "explosion of the 'mob spirit' and its polluting effects upon popular democratic governance" (189). Although Minteer notes that Royce "never came close to offering anything programmatic with respect to the planning and maintenance of such communities" he "identified a very real set of threats to the communal virtues of the American province" and inspired "concrete proposals " like MacKaye's Appalachian Trail (190). In fact, MacKaye's proposal indirectly addresses these problem of modern society with a "plea for an improved recreation aesthetic" and suggests that "the 'reposeful study' of natural process along the Trail would encourage individuals to evaluate the crass commercialism

and industrialism of American life, and that the experience of wild nature would revitalize our productive relations," or what Bryan Norton calls the "'transformative value' of experiences in the natural world" (192-193). MacKaye also intended the Trail to function as a site of resistance against encroaching modern urbanism as part of the "smaller and more organic 'regional city,' conceived and planned in a larger geographic context" that functions as a "bulwark against the 'leveling effects' of modern civilization afflicting the false metropolitan form" (193). Most importantly, MacKaye hoped the Trail would be "but the entrance to the final thing we seek-- that thing eternal which we have called primeval influence," or a what Minter describes as a "decentralized, green vision for an aesthetically, politically, and ecologically reconstructed urban and rural environment" (MacKaye, MP, box 184, folder 40; Minter 195).

Finally, Daniel J. Brunson argues Royce's philosophies of nature, loyalty, and insurance requires commitments to sustainability. Although Brunson does not cite the articles from *The Personalist Forum* (1999), he makes similar appeals to Royce's philosophy of nature, specifically that our "conception of nature is itself derived from our social lives" and that the most relevant differences between humans and, to use Price's terminology, natural beings is that "nature speaks different languages" and "time-scale" ("Insuring an Indefinite Future" 118-120). In fact, Brunson has the luxury of citing previously unavailable scientific discoveries (like the "identifying whistles of dolphins," the "waggle dance" of bees, and plant pheromones) which support Royce's "contention that we have always been participants in a broader social order of nature" (119). Next, Brunson turns to Royce's philosophy of loyalty and highlights its relevance not only to moral perfectionism, but also to the physical and mental health of the individual and the community, citing several passages from *Philosophy of Loyalty*, such as:

"The care of health, self-cultivation, self-control, spiritual power-- these are all to be morally estimated with reference to the one principle [of loyalty to loyalty]." (*Philosophy of Loyalty* 143, Brunson 121)

"Helping the people to the attainment and preservation of their powers obviously involves the sort of care of public health... which our philanthropists and teachers and public-spirited people generally regard as important." (*Philosophy of Loyalty* 216-17, Brunson 122)

"...if you want to train a man to a good life, you must indeed do what you can to give him health and power." (*Philosophy of Loyalty* 218, Brunson 122)

These statements combined with the philosophy of loyalty's implicit commitment to the general well being of fellow community members and the members of other communities requires our present "attention to broad and long-term environmental factors" of our current decisions. Furthermore, Brunson contends this obligation requires us to "simultaneously

respond to the often unwitting consequences of choices made decades or centuries ago *and* strive to consider how the choices we make now affect future generations" ("Insuring an Indefinite Future" 122). While this explication of the philosophy of loyalty alone grounds a commitment to sustainability, Brunson concludes by appealing to Royce's political philosophy in *War and Insurance* (1914) which explicitly states that "international insurance should include calamities other than war, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, migratory pestilences, hurricanes, and famines" which are on the rise due to anthropogenic climate change (123). Thus, while "Royce could not have foreseen the human role in natural calamities... His loyal hope for the great community requires us to take practical action now to ensure the very possibility of that community's future" (123).

As can be seen, Royce's philosophy enables a variety of approaches to environmental philosophy and several of these methodologies reframe the anthropocentrism-biocentrism axiology from a pragmatic perspective. Selk makes a compelling case for why Royce's philosophy of loyalty requires a commitment to nature based on the needs of future generations, but this strategy commits Royce to an anthropocentric approach and mires any latent insights. Thus, the later approaches prove more interesting because they link Royce's philosophy to nature, not merely as a resource to be preserved for future generation but as an aggregate of fellow social beings to whom we have moral obligations. At the level of ontology, Oppenheim shows how Royce's idealism does not reinforce the bifurcation of the cosmos that reduces nature to mere matter to be transcended by the mind or spirit, but rather presents a theology of immanence that embraces naturalism and sees nature as a fellow participant in our attempts to grow spiritually and epistemologically. Likewise, Price further articulates how the panpsychist implications of Royce's idealism makes communing with nature not only a real possibility but an important part of our self development. While Royce's panpsychism may seem counterintuitive and a thorough analysis or defense is beyond the scope of this venue, the hypothesis has a venerable history and has experienced a revival since the publication of David Chalmers "Facing Up to the Hard Problem of Consciousness" (1995). Furthermore, the probability that nature is more conscious than assumed is bolstered by the evidence of communication and social behavior among plants and animals referenced by Brunson. Finally, Bell and Brunson provide compelling applications of Royce's philosophy of loyalty and insurance to ground our moral obligations to natural beings and sustainability, respectively. Finally, Minter's exploration of Royce's influence on MacKaye's regional planning philosophy highlights Royce's relevance to bioregionalism. Thus, Royce provides anthropocentric, theocentric, biocentric, and bioregionalist arguments for why individuals should be loyal to nature, but he also provides egocentric reasons for why an individual should be loyal to nature based on moral perfectionism as can be seen through a brief comparison with the latent environmental philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.

Loyalty to the Earth: Nietzsche's Latent Environmental Philosophy:

In the prologue of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1891), Friedrich Nietzsche's protagonist proclaims "I swear to you, my brothers, *stay loyal to the earth* and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! ... The most dreadful thing is now to sin against the earth" (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Prologue 3). Critical disagreement abounds on how to interpret this bold statement and its promise of developing a robust environmental philosophy from Nietzsche's work: some argue it is a statement of biospheric egalitarianism (Hallman 1991, Nixon 1998, Parkes 1998), others that he is an "aristocratically individualistic 'high humanist'" who sees exploitation as necessary for the will to power (Acampora 1994), and others suggest he goes beyond the anthropocentric-biocentric axiology (Drenthen 2002) to occupy a space parallel to Chinese Daoism or Mahāyāna Buddhism (Parkes 2005).

The first scholar to highlight Nietzsche's latent environmentalism, Max O. Hallman (1991), argues that "While some of Nietzsche's more infamous concepts... may be superfluous or perhaps even antithetical to the development of an ecologically oriented, environmentally concerned philosophizing, he does address certain theoretical questions concerning humanity's relationship to the natural world, and he does so in the context of criticizing traditional Western thinking for being anti-natural, for failing to "remain faithful to the earth" ("Nietzsche's Environmental Ethics" 100). As a result, Nietzsche shares "certain affinities to the ecosystem approach of modern ecologists... especially those who have been classified as deep ecologists," specifically 1) the rejection of a "transcendent world" and a critique of "traditional Western philosophical and religious thinking for being 'otherworldly' and 'anti-natural,'" 2) a rejection of the "human-nature dichotomy" and the anthropocentrism of Western thought, 3) his formulation of the will to power as a "principle that explains change immanently and that suggests the interrelatedness of all living things," and 4) his call for a "return to nature"-- a return whereby the anti-natural tendencies of traditional Western thinking are dispossessed" (100-101).

Hallman supports these claims through a sustained comparison of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity with a similar critique by ecological historian Lynn White, Jr. (101-106) and by showing that Nietzsche shares more with "deep ecologists" like Arne Naess, Bill Devall, and George Sessions than with "reformist ecologists" like John Passmore (106-119). More importantly, Hallman presents Nietzsche's will to power as compatible with the ecological demand championed by Thomas Colwell, et al.,<sup>2</sup> that "we can no longer view the natural world as dead matter in motion,... Rather, nature must be seen as a living, growing, decaying process, and sometimes perhaps even as a living, breathing, organism" (119). According to

Hallman, Nietzsche recognizes the "interdependency of all living things, as well as the importance of environmental factors in the determination of human and nonhuman life" and that "the world itself must be viewed as a gigantic system of interacting forces" i.e. "a 'monster of energy' that is continually forming and reforming, continually creating and recreating, itself" (120-122). Thus, humanity must return to nature and through *amour fati*, love of fate, we become "wholehearted participants in the joyous game of creation and recreation" (124). By "No longer seeking to escape from the Earth and earthly existence, we are finally able to live fully in the natural world, to rest, as Zarathustra so beautifully says, 'near the earth, faithful, trusting, waiting, tied to it with the softest threads'" (125).

Conversely, Ralph R. Acampora (1994) warns against Hallman's maverick interpretation and argues that Nietzsche's latent "biospheric egalitarianism" runs contrary to and is outweighed by his "strong vision of aristocratic individualism" ("Using and Abusing Nietzsche..." 187). Acampora disagrees with Hallman for the following reasons: 1) Hallman's textual evidence is selective and relies on the "continual citation of a notoriously dubious text," the unfinished and posthumous *The Will to Power* 2) Nietzsche's "fairly obvious elitism" 3) in *Beyond Good & Evil*, Nietzsche explicitly states that "Exploitation" is a necessary condition of the will to power because "it belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life" (Sec. 259), and 4) Nietzsche's ridicule of the Stoics for desiring to live "According to nature" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Sec. 9; "Using and Abusing Nietzsche..." 188-190). Acampora admits Nietzsche may "anticipate some aspects of contemporary ecology" due to his "naturalistic transcendentalism," i.e. that humanity is "basically a natural phenomenon" which possesses the potential to "transcend, or 'make more' of, their ordinary conditions," but "whatever eco-natural holism Nietzsche may embrace, it is a variety that does not preclude the possibility... of hierarchical visions or transcendental aspirations" ("Using and Abusing Nietzsche..." 191-192). Furthermore, Hallman's use of *amor fati* glosses over the fact that nature is destructive as well as creative (193). In conclusion, Acampora agrees that Nietzsche provides an important critique of Western culture and perhaps some other resources for ecophilosophers, but Hallman's presentation of Nietzsche as a biospheric egalitarian is a caricature that misappropriates Nietzsche's ideas.

Subsequent scholarship on Nietzsche's latent environmentalism has either attempted to bolster Hallman's interpretation or present an alternative. Andrew Nixon (1998) supports Hallman by referencing Nietzsche's biography, minor works, and intellectual influences. It is well known that Nietzsche "had a strong affinity, perhaps reverence, for nature" from a young age and that throughout his life he "continued to find solace and inspiration in nonhuman nature." ("Nietzsche and Environmental Ethics" 73-74) In fact, after retiring from his position at Basel he would "spend six to eight hours a day, when

not indisposed by illness, hiking though pine woods and around alpine lakes" (Parkes "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy" 1999, 169). Nietzsche expresses this fondness in a lecture delivered at Basel entitled "On the Future of Our Educational Institutions":

If you want to lead a young person onto the right path of education and culture, be careful not to disturb his naively trustful and personally immediate relationship with nature...in this way he will unconsciously sympathize with the metaphysical oneness of all things in the great metaphor of nature, and at the same time calm himself with their eternal perseverance and necessity. ("On the Future of Our Educational Institution" 95-96)

Furthermore, Nixon claims Nietzsche's "affinity for nature also has literary roots, manifest in his unfaltering admiration for the transcendentalists Goethe and Emerson," specifically Emerson's commission in the essay *Nature* for a "reunion of human and nonhuman nature, beckoning us to 'enjoy an original relation to the universe'" (Emerson *Essays and Lectures* 7; Nixon "Nietzsche and Environmental Ethics" 75). Thus, this evidence "further reinforces that for Nietzsche nature was no peripheral subject matter, but a lifelong passion and philosophical preoccupation" ("Nietzsche and Environmental Ethics" 75).

In direct response to Acampora, Nixon argues Nietzsche's perspectivism and experimentalism undermine attempts to present Nietzsche as exclusively an aristocratic individualist. According to Nixon, perspectivism "underscore[s] the absurdity of any claim to human dominion over nonhuman nature" and Nietzsche was fond of using the perspective of animals to expose the folly of human behavior and beliefs ("Nietzsche and Environmental Ethics" 77). Likewise, Nietzsche's experimentalism suggests his work is primarily deconstructive of received assumptions and any apparent constructive or systematic ideas, like the *übermensch* or his elitism, are experimental rather than dogmatic (78). Furthermore, this experimentalism gives us license to appropriate or dismiss Nietzsche's ideas as we construct our own experiments according to our current needs (79). Finally, he contends that Nietzsche's praise of sublimation, "a process by which the quality of the will to power is transformed into something more positive" implies that while exploitation may be a necessary condition of the will to power "one's ascent to a state of satisfactory power in which one can afford to be 'noble,' need not be barbaric or exploitative" (80). Indeed, Nietzsche himself states "how much injury [one] can endure without suffering from it becomes the actual measure of [one's] wealth" (*Genealogy of Morals* 72). Nixon therefore concludes the will to power "describes a monistic universe that is consistent with the best evidence of contemporary science, and, accompanied by the concept of sublimation, appears to be consistent with the ethical goals of contemporary deep ecology" (82).

Others, like Martin Drenthen (2002), argue that comparing Nietzsche to contemporary discussions of environmental ethics is unsuccessful, not because he does not possess a latent environmental philosophy, but because he surpasses the current

axiology by articulating a fundamental ambiguity within humanity's relationship with nature. Nietzsche reveals that "each environmental ethic that relies on a particular normative concept of nature is in fact a tyranny over nature" but "this tyranny cannot be avoided because each morality is tyrannical and functions within the project of trying to get a grip on nature" ("The Paradox of Environmental Ethics" 172). Thus, Nietzsche's thought functions as "therapy for environmental ethics" where we constantly propose moral interpretations and interrogate them. We then revise them as we encounter "Sublime nature [which] withdraws itself from us... provokes wonder and... awe" and, most importantly, "reminds us of the fact that there is something 'out there' that is valuable in a way we cannot control, identify, or possess." (172-174).

Likewise, Graham Parkes (2005) also laments that the initial attempts to classify Nietzsche as either a biospheric egalitarian or aristocratic humanist are misguided. According to Parkes, both Hallman and Acampora err by presenting the *übermensch* as an expression of aristocratic humanism that conflicts with Nietzsche's latent environmentalism. Parkes stresses that the *übermensch* represents the "possibility of a radically new way of being for the human" and is thus "profoundly relevant for ecological thinking" because it "requires that one go beyond the merely human perspective and transcend the anthropocentric world view" ("Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy" 81). Furthermore, Parkes contends the will to power does not mandate exploitation, but "manifests along a continuum with brute force at one end and world-interpretation at the other" (84). Nietzsche advocates neither a sentimental egalitarianism nor an elitist humanism, but a naturalization of the human which occurs by "encountering nature on its own terms... appalling in its indifference, [while] it is also noble-- and thus worthy of human emulation" (90). This naturalized human "might reasonably be expected to expend its energies tyrannizing itself for the sake of culture rather than tyrannizing nature for the sake of commercial profit" and through the "'dedivinization' of nature" may enjoy an "epiphany in which the natural world shows itself to be divine after all" (91). Parkes concludes that Nietzsche occupies a space similar to the Daoists and Buddhists who "rather than issuing commandments for ethical conduct toward the natural world, advocate certain forms of somatic *practice* that conduce to an experiential realization of its sacred nature" (91).

In summation, Nietzsche clearly possess a latent environmental philosophy that anticipates and in some respects surpasses current theoretical debates. All scholars agree that Nietzsche's critique of Western culture and Christianity indicts their anthropocentric assumptions and resistance to a naturalized vision of humanity's place in nature. Likewise, several of Nietzsche's central concepts, specifically perspectivism, the *übermensch*, and will to power support visions of humanity that lean in the direction of biospheric egalitarianism. Acampora rightfully reminds us of the strong aristocratic elements of



Nietzsche's thought, but given the post-structuralist tradition of Nietzsche as a destroyer of hierarchies and the critiques provided by Nixon, Drenthen, and Parkes, exploitation and elitism emerge as only examples of the many methods and ends of the will to power. Thus, when we acknowledge that nature was both a personal passion and philosophical preoccupation for Nietzsche, we see that encounters with nature are critical to Nietzsche's philosophy of the self and moral philosophy. Finally, these encounters with nature are best achieved through somatic practices, like hiking, rather than theoretical discourse, and are central to an individual's self-creation. If we desire to achieve ourselves, we must remain loyal to the earth.

#### Loyalty to Nature: Royce & Nietzsche in Dialogue:

At first blush, more contrast than comparisons appear between the philosophies of Nietzsche, an atheist and naturalist who exults in the individual, and Royce, a Christian Idealist who values community. Consequently, little scholarly attention has been paid to their parallels, but the evidence for areas of continuity between the two are intriguing and compelling. In the biography *Josiah Royce: From Grass Valley to Harvard* (1992), Robert V. Hine briefly mentions Nietzsche in the context of Royce's interest in theories of the will and their relation to his philosophy of the self. Although Heine focuses more on Arthur Schopenhauer's influence than Nietzsche, it should be noted that Schopenhauer was also a major influence on Nietzsche (173). Thus, both Royce's and Nietzsche's theories of the will and self are in part responses to Schopenhauer. Oppenheim presents the most thorough examination of the parallels between Royce and Nietzsche and considers Nietzsche to be a major, if unexpected dialogue partner of Royce, particularly as he formulates his mature ethics (*Royce's Mature Ethics* 178). Royce first references Nietzsche around 1900 and continues throughout his late work, including both his book *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908) and his "Problem of Truth" (1908) article. Naturally, Royce criticizes Nietzsche's "excessive individuality," but finds his contributions interesting enough to devote an entire article published posthumously that "analyze[s] the heart of the ethical teachings found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Genealogy of Morals*, and *Anti-Christ*" making Royce "among the first Americans to call public attention to the importance of Nietzsche" (189).

According to Oppenheim, Royce and Nietzsche share the assumption that "Ethics studies how a human self should direct its personal energy within our fluxing universe" and the presupposition that "conventional (or herd) morality failed to meet the required standard" because "authentic ethics has to lie primarily, not in conformism, but in autonomous decision making," i.e. voluntarism (*Royce's Mature Ethics* 189). Likewise, Royce praises Nietzsche for identifying "three basic quandaries that need increasingly personal and authentic answers if decision making is to be genuine," (189) specifically: "(1)

Who am I and what do I want? (2) What does this will that seeks power genuinely desire?" and "how, then, should a noble self that seeks perfection relate to the fluxing universe around it?" ("Nietzsche" 322; *Royce's Mature Ethics* 190). Royce initiates his late ethics with similar questions<sup>3</sup> and Nietzsche's contrast between noble and slave morality may have been an "unacknowledged source for his distinction in the *Problem of Christianity* between at least the first two of his three fundamental 'attitudes of will' (self-assertion, self-negation, and genuine loyalty)" (*Royce's Mature Ethics* 191-192).

In summation, Oppenheim identifies three areas of consilience and three areas of divergence between the two philosophers. First, despite Royce's communitarianism, Royce "delighted in Nietzsche's individualism because he himself increasingly emphasized the individualization of the self" in his late work (192). Second, Royce echoes the Nietzschean theme of struggle, specifically the "need to bear life's tragedies and to endure the ostracism and downdrag of the 'herd'" (192). Third, Royce "so purified loyalty... that he focused his ethics directly on only the few authentically moral selves" that it approaches Nietzsche's ethics of the *übermensch* (192). As for disagreement, Oppenheim first cites Royce's appreciation for the "richness of one's personal and cultural past" as conflicting with Nietzsche's contempt for "past happiness, virtues, reasoning, and conventional moderation" (193). Second, Royce places "each human self in communities and held that their universal processing is guided by a pathfinding Spirit of Interpretation-- not a Nietzschean "dead God" but an immanent and transcendent Spirit of the Universal Community" (193). Finally, Royce's "genuinely loyal selves must love and promote every human self" whereas there remains a "fundamental hostility operating between Nietzsche's nobles and slaves" (193). Nevertheless, Oppenheim insists that "Nietzsche played a considerable role as dialogue-partner with Royce in the latter's final decade of thought" (193).

In fact, Rossella Fabbrichesi (2009) further minimizes the divergence between Royce's and Nietzsche's theory of the individual and community. In "The Body of Community: Peirce, Royce, and Nietzsche," she argues these philosophers share similar communitarian versions of the self due to their rejection of the Cartesian Ego, i.e. identifying the "mind with the will, the pure consciousness, with rationality and interiority," in exchange for a semiotic self where the "identity of man resides in the *consistency* of what he does and thinks, and this consistency is expressed through a system of signs, and translated into habits and praxes, that are never completely individual or idiosyncratic... thus, from a sort of alterity, the alterity of the *external* signs in which his personhood is exposed and *extended*" ("The Body of Community: Peirce, Royce, and Nietzsche" 2). Although the previous description of the self is more Peircian, Peirce's semiotics strongly influenced Royce's philosophy of the self and is consistent with Royce's more concrete view of the self where "the real self *is* the community, and, loving my

Beloved Community, I love my real self, *myself* in others, myself in that *third* other represented by the mediation of a public interpretation" (4). Fabbrichesi links Royce to Nietzsche by suggesting that Royce's Beloved Community functions as an *übermensch*, a concrete ideal or project, through which the individual develops her identity (6). Fabbrichesi also highlights the communitarian aspects of Nietzsche's thought, such as sublimation, his admiration of the Greek *polis*, and subsequent examples of *esprit de corps* where a group demonstrates the ability to perform a "single organism, a corporate entity" (7). She concludes that Royce's "'Hope of the Great Community'... means the Hope of a 'Great Politics' and, thus, of the 'Great Health'" (8).

At this juncture, a summary and assessment of the agreement and disagreement between Nietzsche and Royce must be established. Both share understandings of the will shaped by their reading of Schopenhauer and their philosophies of the self seek to uncover the moral criterion an individual should adopt in order to experience their best possible life. Indeed, Royce praises Nietzsche's perfectionism in the final lines of his posthumous essay saying "no one has better expressed in recent times than he the ideal of the search for a consciousness of perfection" ("Nietzsche" 331). Although this combination of voluntarism and perfectionism plays out differently in their writings the differences between the two are reconcilable. Both demand the individual courageously participate in a process of interpretation amongst a community, including allies and rivals, and nature is a crucial member of that community. Both Nietzsche's *übermensch* and Royce's Great Community require equitable encounters with nature if they are to be achieved and projects like MacKaye's Appalachian Trail provides sites where we create our individual and communal identities through voluntary transaction with our biotic community, the animals, plants, and land who share our province. As such, it unites the hopes of Nietzsche and Royce.

More importantly, their contrasts provide important correctives to one another. Although Royce's fallibilism weakens the most vicious anthropocentric elements of his Christian Idealism, Nietzsche's sustained critique of the predatory nature of European culture and its descendants reinforces the need to embrace the contributions of non-European culture or at the least for European communities to renew their commitment to sustainability, conservation, and/or stewardship lest they perpetuate their historical cultural mandates to subdue nature. Likewise, Royce balances Nietzsche's aristocratic high humanism by showing how both self-interests and attempts at perfectionism inevitably lead to communitarianism. Royce presents his best articulation of this implication in *The Sources of Religious Insight* where he states that Nietzsche's egoism is ultimately a "social insight" because "It comes through noting that, even if the individual needs his social world as a means of grace and a gateway to salvation, the social order, in its turn, needs individuals that are worth saving, and can never be saved unless it

expresses itself through the deeds and the inner life of souls deeply conscious of the dignity of self-hood, of the infinite worth of unique and intensely conscious personal life" (*The Sources of Religious Insight* 60). Consequently, this social insight can be applied to nature as well and lean Nietzsche more in the direction of biocentric egalitarianism because a similar symbiotic relationship exists between the individual and community on the one hand and natural beings on the other. To rephrase the above quotation through the lens of this analogy, *humanity* can never be saved unless it expresses itself through deeds and the inner life of souls deeply conscious of the dignity of *natural beings*, of the infinite worth of the unique and intensely conscious *natural world*. We must become loyal to nature if we are to survive the current century. Thus, the anthropocentric-biocentric axiology is revealed to be a false dualism that emphasizes the division between the human individual and the natural world, rather than their essential unity.

In conclusion, Royce's philosophy provides profound resources for grounding our moral obligation to nature and understanding our ecological responsibilities. Royce's ontology demands we recognize ourselves as individuals enmeshed in an inherently social and conscious natural world that is responsive to our transactions. We become ourselves through these social interactions with fellow members of our species, by communing with other natural beings, and through somatic exercises and encounters. We find meaning by transcending the finitude of our individual lives through our commitment not only to human communities and projects but to the land and the fellow natural beings that inhabit it. By honoring the land and our fellow natural beings we recognize the need to perfect ourselves, through practices like ethical eating and voluntary simplicity, and our communities, through our commitments to regional planning and sustainability, lest we be guilty of predatory loyalties. Ultimately, we recognize these loyalties extend not only to our province but to the Earth and beyond.

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1. When Bell writes of loyalties that exist in nature he implies they are the particular ecological relationships that exist in any given habitat.
2. Specifically, Thomas Colwell, Ian McHarg, René Dubos, James Lovelock, and Stephen R. L. Clark (119).
3. “(1) In what sense can a person truly be director of his own life plan, of ‘captain of his soul’? (2) What is the human good that everyone seeks (in some form)? And (3) What is my duty, or what is this ‘obligation to follow some will not my own, to obey, to be bound by laws which are not of my own making’?” (191).

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