

Nietzsche: Autonomy and Nature

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The problem of freedom in Nietzsche touches on complex and fascinating issues: eternal recurrence, fate, will, ego, and so forth. In this paper, I have chosen to discuss the relationship between nature and the creator focusing on the following question: What is the status of nature in the creation of the “free spirit,” and how can nature be shaped by human beings when they themselves are bound by it? Concepts such as “overman,” “free spirits,” “self-creator,” or human beings trying to “command” [*befehlen*] nature seem unwarranted, given Nietzsche’s frequent descriptions of nature as a deterministic system. Nietzsche’s various formulations of physiological-mechanistic determinism make the very freedom of human beings to create themselves and to change their fate a questionable proposition.

In this paper I argue that the creator’s freedom is gained rather than given. But this freedom must also be assumed in order to establish some degree of control over nature. The creator’s freedom, then, includes circularity, though a fruitful one, within Nietzsche’s philosophical endeavor as a whole. What makes this circularity possible? What elements in Nietzsche’s writings lend credence to this type of autonomous creator? In his writings, Nietzsche deals with the autonomy of the creator at various levels, and I clarify the interrelations between them in my attempt to define the creator’s freedom vis-à-vis nature. I attempt to combine metaphysical discussions about reality, freedom, and necessity, with anthropological discussions about the creator, and both of them with Nietzsche’s pragmatic approach, which seeks to realize autonomy within the immanent boundaries of life.