Honest Illusion: Valuing for
Nietzsche's Free Spirits

Nadeem J. Z. Hussain

1. Introduction

There is a widespread, popular view—and one I will basically endorse—that Nietzsche
is, in one sense of the word, a nihilist. As Arthur Danto put it some time ago, according
to Nietzsche, 'there is nothing in [the world] which might sensibly be supposed to have
value.'[1] As interpreters of Nietzsche, though, we cannot simply stop here. Nietzsche's
higher men, *Übermenschen*, 'genuine philosophers', free spirits—the types Nietzsche
wants to bring forth from the human, all-too-human herds he sees around him with
the fish hooks, as he says, of his books—seem to engage in what looks like *valuing*.
These free spirits are supposed to *revalue* the old values—revaluing, as is clear from
the texts, is not simply to remove the old values from circulation (Nietzsche uses
'*umwerten*' and not '*entwerten*')—and they are supposed to create *new* values. And, of
course, Nietzsche himself, free spirit that he is, takes on the task of revaluing all values
and seems to assert many a strident evaluation. So we need to say more here. What are
Nietzsche and his free spirits up to when they engage in what looks, for all the world,
like a practice of valuing? What is the practice of valuing Nietzsche is recommending
for his free spirits?

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[1] Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 33. This is not,
however, the orthodoxy in the Anglo-American secondary literature on Nietzsche. I turn to this issue
later in the essay.

I will argue for two claims:

(i) First, we end up facing an interpretive puzzle when we attempt to explain how Nietzsche's free spirits are supposed to engage in a practice of valuing.

(ii) Second, we can solve the interpretive puzzle by taking Nietzsche's free spirits to be engaged in a fictionalist simulacrum of valuing.

2. The Interpretive Puzzle

2.1 Interpretive Constraints

Nietzsche makes a range of claims about values, valuing, and the tasks and nature of his free spirits and higher men. Any interpretation of Nietzsche needs to take account of these claims; these claims form, as I shall call them, interpretive constraints. The interpretive puzzle I will focus on is generated by a particular set of interpretive constraints:

(1) A central task of Nietzsche's free spirits is the creation and revaluation of values.

Nietzsche, 'free spirits', 'higher men'—the new and genuine philosophers—are the ones 'who write new values on new tablets' (Z P).[2] Nietzsche insists that we must 'reach' towards *new philosophers*: '[T]oward spirits strong and original enough to provide the stimuli for opposite valuations and to revalue and invert "eternal values"' ' (BGE 203). The task is not simply to create new objects, actions, states of affairs, and persons that are valuable given existing values. This would be merely to create more value but not to create new values.[3]

(2) Nietzsche's free spirit 'conceives reality *as it is*'[4]

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[2] In citing Nietzsche's texts I have basically followed the guidelines of the North American Nietzsche Society; I use the following standard English title acronyms: *The Antichrist* (A), *Beyond Good and Evil* (BGE), *Ecce Homo* (EH), *Gay Science* (GS), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM), *Human, All Too Human* (HH), *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (PTA), *Twilight of the Idols* (TI), *Will to Power* (WP), *Zarathustra* (Z). References to Z and TI list abbreviated chapter title and section number. The translations, where available, are listed in the Bibliography. All other translations are mine. Roman numerals refer to major parts or chapters. Arabic numerals refer to sections. For the German text I refer to the *Kritische Studienausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) (KSA) and *Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967–78) (KGW). For Nietzsche's correspondence I refer to *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden* (Munich: de Gruyter, 1986) (KSB).

[3] See also GS 55, 320, 335; Z:1 'On the Three Metamorphoses', 'On the Thousand and One Goals'; BGE 211; TI P; AC, in particular 13; EH 'Destiny' 1; WP 260, 972, 979, 999. See Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 1983), 466–9.

[4] EH 'Destiny' 5: 'concipirt die Realität, *wie sie ist*'. See also GS 2, 110, 283; Z 2 'The Stillest Hour':2; BGE 230; A 50; EH 'Destiny' 3; WP 172.

Nietzsche claims that for many of us, and perhaps for all of us some of the time, 'untruth'—having false or inaccurate beliefs—is 'a condition of life' (BGE 4). Such false beliefs are necessary in order for us to continue living. However, one of the central features of the 'higher men' that sets them apart is precisely their ability, in a sense that will need explication, to face up to the truth: 'How much truth does a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare?* More and more that became for me the real measure of value. Error (faith in the ideal) is not blindness, error is *cowardice*' (EH P:3). The question for Nietzsche is to what extent his free spirits can 'incorporate' truth in their lives (GS 110).[5]

Now, in order to make sense of what the creation of values in (1) might come to, we need a better sense of what it is for something to be valuable according to Nietzsche. Here we come to our third interpretive constraint, the one that does indeed make our interpretive puzzle come into focus.

(3) Nietzsche's nihilism: Nietzsche claims that nothing has value in itself and therefore all claims of the form '*X* is valuable' are false.

I am here, obviously, ascribing to Nietzsche a sweeping error theory about evaluative claims and it will take a bit of interpretive work to justify this particular interpretive constraint. In the case of moral values and moral judgments, the textual evidence is fairly straightforward:

My demand upon the philosopher is known, that he take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* himself. This demand follows from an insight which I was the first to formulate: that *there are altogether no moral facts*. Moral judgments agree with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities. Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena—more precisely a misinterpretation. Moral judgments, like religious ones, belong to a stage of ignorance at which ... 'truth,' ... designates all sorts of things which we today call 'imaginings.'   (TI, 'Improvers', 1)

I will take such textual evidence to be sufficient to ascribe to Nietzsche an error theory about moral claims. For the purposes of this essay, an error theory about morality need involve only the following claim: the beliefs expressed by moral judgments are false because they involve believing in moral facts when in fact there are none. We can use Nietzsche's own analogy with religious judgments to provide an example of an error theory about something other than moral claims. An error theory about

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[5] This ideal for Nietzsche's higher men is compatible with the possibility that some degree of falsification may be ineliminable from our beliefs including those of the higher men. For an extended discussion of Nietzsche's metaphysics and epistemology, see Nadeem J. Z. Hussain, 'Nietzsche's Positivism,' *European Journal of Philosophy* 12/3 (2004): 326–68.

religion would claim that religious judgments express beliefs that are false because they involve believing in certain entities, such as God, that do not exist.[6]

However, the explicitly error-theoretic claims in Nietzsche's texts do tend to occur only where morality in some narrow sense seems to be the topic. For non-moral evaluations, we often get passages of the following form: 'Whatever has *value* in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less, but has been *given* value at some time, as a present—and it was *we* who

[6] According to traditional typologies of the metaethical domain, an error theory is a conjunction of two claims, one semantic and the other substantive. The first claim is that of cognitivism. Moral claims are truth-apt; they are true or false. Moral judgments are then taken to express beliefs. The second claim is that such moral claims, and thus the relevant beliefs, are systematically false. Given the truth-conditions moral claims have, it turns out that the world is not the way these claims say it is. Cognitivism here is to be contrasted with non-cognitivism. Staying for now with the traditional typologies, a non-cognitivist account claims that moral judgments express a conative state, perhaps some pro-attitude, rather than a cognitive state such as belief. Moral claims then are not truth-apt. They never were about moral facts. It makes as little sense to assess them for truth or falsity as it does to assess commands for truth or falsity (for surveys of such traditional topologies, and worries about them, see Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, in Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (ed.), 'Introduction: The Many Moral Realisms.' in *Essays on Moral Realism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 1–21, and Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard, and Peter Railton, 'Toward *Fin de siècle* Ethics: Some Trends,' *The Philosophical Review* 101/1 (1992): 115–89).

Given this traditional typology, to claim that Nietzsche is an error theorist would then involve ascribing to him a particular view about the semantics of moral discourse, namely, cognitivism. This would appear to conflict with Leiter's claim that 'there are inadequate textual resources for ascribing to [Nietzsche] a satisfying answer' to questions about the semantics of moral claims (Brian Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Metaethics: Against the Privilege Readings,' *European Journal of Philosophy* 8/3 (2000): 278). Thus 'there are simply not adequate grounds for "assigning" to Nietzsche a view on such subtle matters as whether ethical language is primarily cognitive or non-cognitive' (279). Leiter suggests that ascribing any view on these matters to historical figures would be anachronistic (278). However, as long as we stay within the traditional typology, it does not make much sense to claim that Nietzsche could be a non-cognitivist. After all, such a traditional non-cognitivist would not draw the conclusion that there is something wrong with moral judgment from the claim that there are no moral facts, since moral judgments never were about moral facts in the first place.

Contemporary non-cognitivists often reject the traditional typology. Such a non-cognitivist would provide an account according to which it was perfectly fine to take moral claims as truth-apt and moral judgments as expressing beliefs (see, for example, Simon Blackburn, *Spreading the Word: Groundings in the Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) and Simon Blackburn, *Essays in Quasi-Realism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)). Indeed, it would be fine to claim that there are moral facts. Of course, the account of such talk turns out to be rather more complicated than we perhaps originally thought. Once we leave the traditional typology behind and consider the possibility of such contemporary non-cognitivist positions, then I agree with Leiter that we lack adequate grounds for assigning Nietzsche a view on such matters. However, for the purposes of this essay, the important point to note is that such a contemporary non-cognitivist could be an error theorist too. Such a non-cognitivist could in principle claim that the beliefs expressed by moral judgments are false because they involve believing in moral facts when in fact there are none. We can thus ascribe an error theory to Nietzsche without 'assigning' him a view on semantic issues.

gave and bestowed it' (GS 301).[7] The claim that nothing has value in itself occurs repeatedly in Nietzsche's texts. 'In themselves', says Nietzsche, things are not 'beautiful, attractive, and desirable' (GS 299). Now such passages are not obviously to be construed along error-theoretic lines. We could use them to ascribe to Nietzsche a subjectivist realism.[8] I use the term 'realism' here in a way that is perhaps not so common outside of discussions in metaethics. A metaethical theory is realist if it provides a cognitivist account of the claims in question and takes the truth-conditions not to be systematically or inescapably false.[9] The account would be a kind of subjectivism because it takes the truth-conditions of evaluative claims as involving some essential reference to an agent's states. That is to say, claims of the form 'X is valuable' are true, but in virtue of the object, state of affairs, what-have-you, standing in certain relations to agents. An agent falls under some such relation in virtue of being in some state or having some property. Something is valuable in virtue of, for example, our having certain attitudes towards the thing. As long as we had the requisite attitudes towards the relevant objects, evaluative claims could be straightforwardly true.

The proposed subjectivist realist reading does not, however, square with certain themes in Nietzsche's texts. At work in Nietzsche's texts is a distinction between theoretical nihilism and practical nihilism.[10] Theoretical nihilism is the belief in valuelessness, or as Nietzsche often puts it, goallessness.[11] Practical nihilism is the practical consequence in most agents of the belief, usually only a tacit belief, in valuelessness or goallessness. Practical nihilism consists of a range of psychological and sociological phenomena. Now it is certainly true that Nietzsche is extremely concerned about the rise of practical nihilism, but theoretical nihilism is something that he does indeed seem to endorse:

It is only late that one musters the courage for what one really knows. That I have hitherto been a thorough-going nihilist, I have admitted to myself only recently: the energy and radicalism with which I have advanced as a nihilist deceived me about this basic fact. When one moves

[7] See also HH 4; D 3; GS 115; BGE P, 107; Z:1 'On the Thousand and One Goals', 1 'On the Afterworldly'; WP 428. Cf. Z P:9, 1 'On the Flies of the Market Place'; WP 972.

[8] It is some such interpretation of Nietzsche that I take to be defended in Harold Langsam, 'How to Combat Nihilism: Reflections on Nietzsche's Critique of Morality,' *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 14/2 (1997): 235–53.

[9] A realist can, of course, think that most moral judgments in the past, and even perhaps most moral judgments today, are false. However, to be a realist about our moral discourse a theorist must think that at least some central moral claims are indeed true. Or at least this is how I shall use the term 'realist' in order to distinguish moral realists from error-theorists. In making just this point, Sayre-McCord emphasizes that a moral realist must be committed to a 'Success Theory' in contrast to an 'Error Theory' (Sayre-McCord, 'Introduction', 10). In any case, the argument of the essay does not turn on how we should settle such terminological issues.

[10] See, for example, WP 4   [11] See, for example, HH I:33, WP 2.

toward a goal it seems impossible that 'goal-lessness as such' is the principle of our faith. (WP 25)[12]

Perhaps more problematic for the proposed subjective realist reading of Nietzsche is that he does often raise problems for evaluation in general. Thus he says that 'all evaluations are premature and are bound to be' (HH I:32). 'The falsity of human [evaluative] judgments,' says Nietzsche, occurs with 'absolute necessity' (HH I:32).[13] This is because they involve a '*necessary* injustice' (HH I:P:6). He says, 'You shall learn to grasp the *necessary* injustice in every For and Against' (HH I:P:6): 'You shall learn to grasp the sense of perspective in every value judgement—the displacement, distortion and merely apparent teleology of horizons ... the quantum of stupidity that resides in antitheses of values and the whole intellectual loss which every For and Against costs us' (HH I:P:6).

Now, whatever we may think is the right way to make sense of what Nietzsche is saying here in detail, and I will come back to that in a moment, two things are clear. First, worries about evaluative judgments are not just restricted to moral judgments in some narrow sense of moral. All evaluative judgments involve some kind of mistake *necessarily*. There appears to be something involved in evaluative judgments *qua* evaluative judgments that is problematic. Of course, moral evaluative judgments could suffer from some additional problem, perhaps that they are false. However, and this brings us to the second point, it seems that a subjective realism about non-moral evaluations would have trouble with such passages. After all, if indeed evaluative claims have the proposed subjective truth-conditions, then they do not get the world wrong. They do not seem to involve any essential intellectual loss.

These considerations force us to reinterpret the passage from the *Gay Science*, and other similar passages, that suggested the subjective realism in the first place. Why would Nietzsche repeatedly insist that nothing is valuable 'in itself' if it was not to suggest some kind of subjectivist realism? The answer is that Nietzsche thinks that our evaluations of things involve judgments that things are valuable in themselves. It is in order to undermine our evaluative judgments that Nietzsche emphasizes that things do not have value in themselves.

Indeed this way of interpreting Nietzsche allows us to make sense of certain things he says about values and valuing. First, it helps us make sense of his use of the metaphor of value being 'given' as a 'present' (GS 301)[14]—elsewhere he talks of 'placing values in

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[12] See also, for example, HH I:33 on the 'ultimate goallessness of man'.

[13] The context of this passage makes clear that Nietzsche is talking about all evaluative judgments.

[14] 'Was nur *Werth* hat in der jetzigen Welt, das hat ihn nicht an sich, seiner Natur nach,—die Natur ist immer werthlos:—sondern dem hat man einen Werth einmal gegeben, geschenkt, und *wir* waren diese Gebenden und Schenkenden!' (GS 301).

things'.[15] A present, once given, is possessed by that which receives the present. When something is placed in some other thing, it is now *in* the other thing. Things appear to have value *in* themselves but this is not because they are in fact valuable in themselves but in virtue of us. Nietzsche is making the typical error-theorist's explanatory claim: things appear as if they are valuable in themselves, but that appearance is generated by us.

Second, we can now explain Nietzsche's talk of a necessary injustice involved in all evaluative judgments. The necessary injustice involved in all value judgments is an injustice against other possible objects of valuing. We take this object as demanding that it be valued. We take this demand as arising from something in the object that distinguishes it from other objects. What we take as distinguishing it from other objects is that it is valuable in itself. In fact, however, it is not valuable in itself. It is not any more valuable in itself than any other object. Our treatment of these other objects, of other evaluations involving these other objects, is thus 'unfair' and 'unjust'. However, an evaluation in favor of some other alternative would simply in turn be unjust to everything else. Evaluations are thus necessarily unjust.

The error theory about evaluative judgments expressed by interpretive constraint (3) thus allows us to make sense of what Nietzsche has to say about values and valuing as he finds them. This error theory succeeds in accounting for a greater range of texts than the proposed subjective realist option we have considered.[16]

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[15] 'Werthe legte erst der Mensch in die Dinge' (Z:1 'On the Thousand and One Goals').

[16] Two points: First, the argument against ascribing subjective realism to Nietzsche can be constructed in a more painstaking manner. We could take as a premise that Nietzsche explicitly only claims that things are not valuable in themselves. We could then attempt to look for the relations between agents and objects (states of affairs, actions, etc.) that we could use to come up with a subjective realist set of truth-conditions for evaluative claims. As it turns out, it is not at all easy to see how to do this. One would normally use an agent's pro-attitudes to construct such truth-conditions; however, Nietzsche bemoans the fact that pro-attitudes themselves are constituted by evaluative judgments. It is this that makes us 'from the very beginning illogical and thus unjust beings ... this is one of the greatest and most irresolvable discords of existence' (HH I:32). There is a discord because we cannot exist, so Nietzsche says, without pro- and con-attitudes. However, if having some set of pro-attitudes towards an object were sufficient to make it the case that the object is valuable, then surely Nietzsche would not speak with such a despairing tone. This comes in the end as no particular surprise given what Williams calls Nietzsche's 'minimalist moral psychology' (see Bernard Williams, 'Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology,' *European Journal of Philosophy* 1/1 (1993): 4--14). The moral psychological resources in Nietzsche's texts for constructing such a subjective realist account do not give us much to work with.

Second, the ascription of an error theory about evaluative judgments to Nietzsche may seem to be in tension with the fact that he himself repeatedly makes evaluative judgments and that he seems to think his 'free spirits' should also engage in evaluation. This indeed is very much part of the interpretive puzzle that I am at this point attempting to lay out and that I will solve later in this essay.

Let us now turn to the final interpretive constraint:

(4) There is a close connection drawn in Nietzsche's works between art, the avoidance of practical nihilism, and the creation of new values.

The last interpretive constraint, and, as I shall eventually argue, the key to the eventual solution to our interpretive puzzle, is a close connection drawn in Nietzsche's works between art, the avoidance of practical nihilism, and the creation of value. The connection between art and his solution to the undermining of values is a persistent theme in Nietzsche's writings. Let me give you a quick survey. This begins of course with his famous statement in *The Birth of Tragedy*: 'it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*' (BT 5. This claim is repeated in BT 24). Such a role for art remains central to Nietzsche's thought even though he gives up the Schopenhauerian metaphysics and romanticism of the view defended in *The Birth of Tragedy*.[17] In his notes from the period right after *The Birth of Tragedy*, we see him returning again and again to the thought that art might be an antidote or a response to the threat of practical nihilism generated by the natural sciences and their depiction of the world as lacking value in itself.[18]

In his book *Human All-Too-Human*, right after the discussion of the necessary injustice involved in valuing that I considered above, Nietzsche says that someone who clearly realized the 'goallessness' of man might well see 'actions acquire in his own eyes the character of useless squandering', but, Nietzsche suggests, it is the poets, who faced with this goallessness will know how to 'console themselves' (HH I:33).

In a section of *The Gay Science* entitled '*What one should learn from artists*', Nietzsche asks, 'How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think that in themselves they never are.' His answer is 'that we should learn from artists' how to deal with this lack of value in our lives (GS 299). Similarly, we hear an echo of the position expressed in *The Birth of Tragedy* at the end of Book II of *The Gay Science*:

Our ultimate gratitude to art. —If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science . . . would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance. . . . As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us. (GS 107)

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[17] See Nietzsche's own critiques of *The Birth of Tragedy* in BT 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' and EH 'Books' BT.

[18] See Daniel Breazeale (ed.), *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1979) for a useful selection.

Similarly in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche demands an opposition to the ascetic ideal. This opposition cannot come from science since 'it never creates values.' However, art 'is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science', since in 'art . . . the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience' (GM III:25). So the suggestion is that art, in some way that will need to be explicated, does help in the creation of new values.[19]

2.1.1 The Puzzle Itself

Given the way I have set matters up, at this point it is perhaps already clear what the interpretive puzzle is, and even, perhaps, what I am going to claim is the solution. One straightforward way of putting the puzzle is this. Given interpretive constraint (1) it seems as if Nietzsche's free spirits are supposed to engage in valuing and create values. However, given interpretive constraint (3), there do not seem to be any values. We might think that perhaps Nietzsche's free spirits are simply supposed to have false beliefs. They are supposed to believe that things are valuable in themselves even though such beliefs are false. This would, perhaps, be an achievement, since after all, intentionally getting oneself to have false beliefs is, as we know, a delicate business that requires, so to speak, much skill. But I think this interpretation runs into interpretive constraint (2), namely, that Nietzsche's free spirits and higher men are distinguished by their ability to face up to reality. I take a systematic holding of false beliefs to be a failing in this regard. If there is another way to manage to do something we might want to call creating values that avoids buying into an ideology, then surely Nietzsche's free spirits would take this option. So the interpretive puzzle is how can we make sense of the importance of values and valuing in Nietzsche's higher men and free spirits—including, importantly, himself—while staying within our interpretive constraints?[20]

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[19] See also, for example, GS P:301; TI 'Skirmishes', 24.

[20] It is also useful to draw a distinction between what one might call an 'internal' and an 'external' interpretive puzzle. The internal interpretive puzzle is generated by interpretive constraints derived from Nietzsche's texts. As always with interpretations, even if we do find an account of what it is for free spirits to value that coheres with these interpretive constraints, if this interpretation does not seem philosophically plausible, then there will be some defeasible pressure to come up with another interpretation of Nietzsche's texts. A version of the principle of charity would be in play. The 'external' grounds that would generate such pressure would be various platitudes about values and valuing that we tend to hold (I borrow the talk of 'platitudes' here from Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)). Now, of course, we need to be prepared that Nietzsche would reject some of these platitudes or radically reinterpret them. Surely Nietzsche is precisely the kind of thinker for whom we need to leave open such a possibility. Nonetheless, if too many of these platitudes are rejected, the worry will be that Nietzsche is simply changing the subject on us.

Such platitudes would include the following. There is a distinction between valuing and wanting (see, for example, Harry Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' *Journal of*

3. The Solution to the Interpretive Puzzle

The central thought in my solution to the interpretive puzzle is that valuing, in Nietzsche's recommended practice, involves the generation of 'honest illusions'. It can be thought of as a form of make-believe, pretending, or, the non-Nietzschean phrase adopted here, 'regarding...as': S values X by regarding X as valuable in itself while knowing that in fact X is not valuable in itself.[21] The motivation for this interpretive strategy arises, perhaps not surprisingly, from what I have called interpretive constraint (4), namely, the suggestion in Nietzsche's texts that there is some close connection between art, avoiding practical nihilism, and the creation of values.

I will proceed by ruling out some natural suggestions for solving the interpretive puzzle. I will motivate my solution by attempting to understand how our interpretive constraints fit into Nietzsche's larger concerns and by considering a range of textual evidence.

It is perhaps best to begin with Nietzsche's controversial psychological claims about his contemporaries and his worries, as I have already mentioned, about practical nihilism.[22] The recognition, conscious or unconscious, that nothing is valuable in itself causes certain kinds of desires and drives to lose their force. The drives and desires in question are those fundamental drives and desires that provide us with the kind of psychological unity required to give our lives continuity and structure—required to give an overall direction to our lives. The threat that such drives and desires will lose their force, or that we might not be able to acquire them, is the threat of what

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Philosophy 68/1 (1971): 5–20; Gary Watson, 'Free Agency,' in Gary Watson (ed.), *Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 81–95; and Smith, *Moral Problem*, 133–47). Judging, or the claim, that something is valuable involves some kind of practicality or internalist constraint (see, for example, Stephen L. Darwall, 'Internalism and Agency,' in James E. Tomberlin (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives* (Ridgeview: Atascadero, 1992), 155–74; Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton, 'Toward *Fin de siècle* Ethics,' 115–19, and Smith, *Moral Problem*, 147–8). Valuing plays a particular kind of regulative role in an agent's practical deliberations. Valuing has some special connection to autonomy. Finally, valuing involves some appeal to a source of normativity or authority (see Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, ed. Onora O'Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)).

Dealing with the external interpretive puzzle is a task that I will not take up in this essay.

[21] I will begin by focusing on how Nietzsche's free spirits could reproduce a simulacrum of the existing practices of valuing. As we shall see, this already involves the creativity of art. We will then see how this creativity can be deployed to produce new values. So for now I will just talk of the generic act of regarding X as valuable and not of specific kinds of value.

[22] Nietzsche's claim is expressed here in terms of the psychological dispositions and attitudes of his contemporaries in order to leave open the question of whether we now have the same dispositions and attitudes.

Nietzsche calls practical nihilism.[23] Nietzsche appears to think that practical nihilism can show up in many different forms: on the one hand, in the form of psychological structures that lack unity and coherence; on the other hand, in the form of the 'last men' famously depicted in his *Zarathustra*.[24] The 'last men' retain some kind of psychological unity but only in virtue of taking themselves as pursuing a thin notion of happiness definable in a way that does not seem to them to rest on a more substantive and problematic notion of the good, and thus leading shallow, uninspired, insipid, and mundane lives.[25]

If we are right that Nietzsche holds such a view about the psychological tendencies and the practice of valuing of his contemporaries, then perhaps we can read Nietzsche as simply insisting that the higher men rise out of this practical nihilism by believing that things are valuable in themselves. However, as I have already pointed out, it appears hard to square this suggestion with our second interpretive constraint. Perhaps we could require that the higher men believe that things are valuable in themselves while knowing that in fact that is not the case. But is this kind of willed self-deception psychologically possible? Could Nietzsche really be asking his higher men to do this?

This is the kind of reading of Nietzsche that Bernard Yack adopts. Yack raises worries similar to mine:

Hegel argues that we cannot resurrect the kind of culture Nietzsche longs for because we know that our objects are not infinitely valuable. Nietzsche agrees that we know this, but he argues that, given this knowledge and the knowledge of what makes a culture healthy, we must impose such limitations upon ourselves, knowing all the while that they are without any inherent justification.[26]

Yack often reads Nietzsche as suggesting that the free spirits actually have to forget that the world has no value in itself. However, as Yack points out, Nietzsche at times

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[23] 'What does nihilism mean?...The aim is lacking; "why?" finds no answer' (WP 2). The term 'nihilism' itself plays different roles in different contexts in Nietzsche's texts. Thus certain values can be nihilistic in that they persuade men to pursue a path that involves a denigration of this life for the sake of *nothingness*! Of course, one does not say "nothingness" but "beyond" or "God," or "*true* life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness' (A 7).

[24] Z P:5.

[25] To provide a justification for Nietzsche's claims here would require assessing Nietzsche's claims about the role that judgments of value play in the economy of the drives and desires that according to him constitute the self. Nietzsche also takes himself as having an essentially historical explanation for the presence of these psychological tendencies. He takes humans as having developed a need for regarding what we do in our lives as being justified by something beyond our own inclinations, desires, and drives (GS 1).

[26] Bernard Yack, *The Longing for Total Revolution: Philosophic Sources of Social Discontent from Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 341. This is not, of course, to suggest that Hegel is reacting to Nietzsche.

seems to suggest that a free spirit does not actually forget but indeed is able to have in his consciousness both the thought that the world is valueless and the psychological states required to value things. Yack makes the stronger claim that for Nietzsche '[t]he whole virtue of self-forgetfulness that Nietzsche praises, however, lies in its being *willed*.'[27] But Yack asks, 'How can one will forgetfulness, while remembering what and why one must forget?'[28] Yack points to arguments by Elster in order to suggest that such forgetfulness cannot be willed.[29] The worry is that Nietzsche would be requiring his higher men to carry out an impossible task.

It is, however, important to remember that there is a whole range of notions that can be referred to by such terms as 'forgetfulness' and 'self-deception'. This range of notions is often ignored by interpreters who ascribe to Nietzsche a single usage of terms such as forgetfulness. At one extreme there is the suggestion in Nietzsche of the particularly strong claim that there are truths humans just cannot know if they are to survive, or, as is sometimes suggested, if they are to develop in certain ways. In a weaker form, this is often expressed as a claim that there are truths which weaker humans cannot face up to. It is hard to see how one could argue for the stronger claim. After all, would not the philosopher need to know the truths in order to claim that such and such particular truths are those that are bad for us? A charitable reading of Nietzsche would take him as arguing for the following version of the strong claim: there are some truths or other, specified schematically, unknown to all including Nietzsche, that we cannot afford to know. An argument for the weaker claim would not have the same air of paradox surrounding it as long as it were understood that the philosopher presenting the argument was one of the stronger humans. At other times it appears that the suggestion is that there are truths we can know and even in our cooler moments of reflection allow ourselves to dwell on; however, we cannot allow them to be the centre of our focus and still function in our daily lives. Here the issue is not quite self-deception but rather an issue of the centrality of certain thoughts to one's conscious life. We can know certain truths some of the time but at other times we must learn to 'forget' them. The talk of forgetfulness in this sense suggests that perhaps they still can be in our memory 'somewhere' and recalled later, or just that we cannot dwell on them even if we have not in some stronger sense forgotten them.

Such suggestions, however, do not yet fully appreciate, I want to claim, the importance of Nietzsche's references to art. What is special, for Nietzsche, about art is that it is honest about its use of illusion. Art is in the business of generating honest illusions. In fact, Nietzsche thinks that when compared to the status of the

[27] Yack, *Total Revolution*, 352–3.   [28] Ibid. 341.

[29] Ibid. He refers to Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 44–52.

empirical sciences within Kant's conception of the world, art 'alone is now honest'.[30] In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche demands an opposition to the ascetic ideal. What is important to note is that Nietzsche says that the opposition to the ascetic ideal cannot come from science since 'it never creates values'. However, art 'is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science', since in 'art . . . the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience' (GM III:25). Art understands that its illusions are illusions without the illusions themselves being undermined.[31] For example, we see a water jug in a painting. We are aware that before us there is only oil paint on canvas. We can come to know that, say, the precision of the illusion—the way the water jug seems to nestle into the carpet resting on the table—is created by a technique of colouring that when viewed up close presents an image that is out of focus but comes into focus when we step back. We can see the illusion even while knowing that it is an illusion.

Now what this requires is being able to master what Nietzsche calls the 'knowledge drive'.[32] Being overly concerned with knowledge, with knowing what is really in front of us, can result in our being unable to see an illusion. This may strike us as implausible in the case of representational art. After all, it is in fact rather hard to see a painting of a person just as a surface of coloured patches. The point is better illustrated by the illusion of seeing a cloud as an elephant, Gestalt figures, or seeing the once popular SEEING EYE™ images.[33] Too much concern with the facts will, as a matter of psychological fact, tend to destroy the illusion.[34]

[30] LP 73, TL 184.

[31] See LP 46. See also TL 184. 'We possess *art* lest we *perish of the truth*' (WP 822).

Art can fail to be *honest* illusion. This is what prevents Nietzsche from being inconsistent when he complains that with Wagner 'the musician now becomes an actor, his art develops more and more as a talent to *lie*' (CW 7). As it becomes clear both in *CW* and in Nietzsche's own notes referred to in *CW*, the problem is not illusion and lying itself, but whether or not the artist and the viewer of the art are aware that illusion and lying are present. The distinction is between art as honest illusion and art as dishonest illusion. Nietzsche's critique of Wagner, Liszt, and Victor Hugo is a critique of art as *dishonest* illusion, and not a critique of the importance of art or illusion. For Schacht's mistaken conclusion that Nietzsche's critiques of Wagner's art implies that Nietzsche no longer regards the centrality of illusion in art as valuable, see his, *Nietzsche*, 514–15.

[32] LP 46. See also TL 184.

[33] These are the pictures that look like a dense pattern of coloured patches without any representational import. Looking at the surface—actually, looking through the surface—in a particular way results in one's perceiving a three-dimensional image. The effect is quite striking. For most people it takes much concentration and practice to see the image, and some claim to be simply incapable of seeing the image.

[34] Cf. 'The relevant general principle is that evidence of the falsity of a proposition imposed forcefully on one's consciousness makes it difficult to imagine vividly that the proposition is true' (Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 15).

Nietzsche clearly thinks that such a mastering, or at least appropriate placing, of the knowledge drive is possible. In his discussion of the structure of our drives towards truth and knowledge, he suggests approvingly that to part of our basic drives

belongs the occasional will of the spirit to let itself be deceived, perhaps with a capricious intimation of the fact that such and such is *not* the case, that one merely accepts such and such a delight in all uncertainty and ambiguity, a jubilant self-enjoyment in the arbitrary narrowness and secrecy of some nook, in the all too near, in the foreground, in what is enlarged, diminished, displaced, beautified. (BGE 230)

We need to prevent a concern with knowledge from dominating the way in which we interact and approach the world. Without mastering the knowledge drive we will fail to see the illusions of art.

But what does the possibility of art as honest illusion in Nietzsche tell us about valuing for his free spirits? The connection between art and valuing is that art allows us to see how we can regard something as valuable even when it is in fact not valuable, and we know that it is not valuable. If art can generate honest illusions, then by investigating art we might see how we can make something appear valuable.[35] From art we could learn how to *regard* something *as* valuable in itself even when we know that it is not valuable in itself. Thus my solution to the interpretive puzzle is that Nietzsche's recommended practice for his free spirits is a simulacrum of valuing. Nietzsche's recommended practice is a form of make-believe or pretence. Nietzsche's free spirits pretend to value something by regarding it as valuable in itself while knowing that in fact it is not valuable in itself.

Before we turn to a further analysis of this suggestion, allow me to pile up some more textual evidence in its favor. This will also allow me to add some more flesh to the skeletal view just presented. Nietzsche makes the above connection between art and valuing most clearly in *The Gay Science*. Consider the end of the 1886 preface to *The Gay Science*.[36] Nietzsche says that those that have returned from 'the sickness of severe suspicion' do not pursue what others call pleasure and art:

No, if we convalescents still need art, it is another kind of art . . . There are a few things we now know too well, we knowing ones: oh, how we now learn to forget well, and to be good at *not* knowing, as artists!

And as for our future, one will hardly find us again on the paths of those Egyptian youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this

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[35] The reason for expressing this in phenomenological terms will become clear in a moment.

[36] I emphasize the date of the preface to suggest that the views on art in *The Gay Science* are not in some way idiosyncratic to *The Gay Science*. The preface was written in the autumn of 1886 at around the same time that Nietzsche was having *Beyond Good and Evil* published.

will to truth, to 'truth at any price,' this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm.

. . .

Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, worlds, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—out of profundity. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of present thought and looked around from up there—we who have looked down from up there? Are we not precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore—artists? (GS P:4)

Now again we could read this passage along Yack's lines as a suggestion to forget completely the knowledge we have gained, in particular, the knowledge that the world is without value. However, this would not explain why being an *artist* is so essential for Nietzsche, and thus why we have 'to be good at *not* knowing, as artists!' The above interpretive solution, where art allows us to see how we can regard things as valuable even when we know that they are not valuable, opens up the possibility of another interpretation of this phrase. Not to know something 'as an artist' is to prevent the drive to knowledge, 'the will to truth', from becoming so dominant that we fail to be able to experience the evaluative illusion. But that, as we saw earlier, is not simply to forget what we know.

But why do we have to be artists rather than just appreciators of art? Seeing an evaluative illusion only seems to require the latter. However, if regarding things as valuable is meant to form the basis for a practice of valuing in everyday life, and not just in art proper, then we, or at least Nietzsche's free spirits, have to learn to regard things in our lives, and even our lives as a whole, as valuable. In these domains we have to create our own evaluative illusions. Thus we have much to learn from artists, but in the end we have to go beyond them. Nietzsche expresses this point as follows in an aphorism entitled 'What one should learn from artists':

How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think that in themselves they never are. Here we should learn something from physicians, when for example they dilute what is bitter or add wine and sugar to a mixture—but even more from artists who are really continually trying to bring off such inventions and feats. Moving away from things until there is a good deal that one no longer sees and there is much that our eye has to add if we are still to see them at all; or seeing things around a corner and as cut out and framed; or to place them so that they partially conceal each other and grant us only glimpses of architectural perspective; or looking at them through tinted glass or in the light of the sunset; or giving them a surface and skin that is not fully transparent—all that we should learn from artists while being wiser than they are in other matters. For with them this subtle power usually comes to an end where art ends and life begins; but we want to be the poets of our life—first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters. (GS 299)

It is the example of art that (i) shows us the psychological possibility of regarding things as valuable even when we know that they are not, and (ii) provides a source for techniques that, suitably refined, could help us succeed in regarding things as valuable outside the domain of art proper. Without the example of art we might have failed to see a way out of the problems generated by our coming to know that nothing in the world is valuable in itself. As Nietzsche puts it at the end of Book II of *The Gay Science*:

Our ultimate gratitude to art.—If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance. We do not always keep our eyes from rounding off something and, as it were, finishing the poem; and then it is no longer eternal imperfection that we carry across the river of becoming—then we have the sense of carrying a *goddess*, and feel proud and childlike as we perform this service. As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us, and art furnishes us with eyes and hands and above all the good conscience to be *able* to turn ourselves into such a phenomenon.   (GS 107)[37]

This passage brings us to a central feature of the interpretive strategy proposed here. It is important to see Nietzsche as making a phenomenological claim about the practice of valuing in which he finds his contemporaries engaged. Evaluations 'color' things. Things in the world are experienced, in some sense, as having their value in them.[38] Thus Nietzsche says:

The extent of moral evaluations: they play a part in almost every sense impression. Our world is *colored* by them.

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[37] There is a complexity here that I am avoiding. Art is central for Nietzsche from the very beginning. It is in *The Birth of Tragedy* that we get Nietzsche's famous statement: 'it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*' (BT 5. This claim is repeated in BT 24). Art remains central to Nietzsche's thought; however, Nietzsche's position on art changes. Nietzsche's views on art in *The Birth of Tragedy* are tied up with Schopenhauerian metaphysics and an accompanying romanticism that he later repudiates. See Nietzsche's own critiques of *The Birth of Tragedy* in BT 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' and EH 'Books' BT.

There is another, perhaps more important, complexity that I am also avoiding. Nietzsche's suggestions about the importance of art, and given my interpretation, the importance of artistic illusions can also be read as a defence of the importance of illusions or fictions in general. This might include cases that we would not regard as cases of evaluative illusion. I will not try here to work out the degree to which Nietzsche might be concerned with what we would call purely descriptive illusions; however, what is perhaps important to point out in any case is that for Nietzsche much of what we might take to be descriptive illusions would indeed be evaluative illusions. For further discussion, see Hussain, 'Nietzsche's Positivism'.

[38] 'When we speak of values, we speak with the inspiration, with the way of looking at things, which is part of life' (TI 'Morality', 5). See also Frithjof Bergmann, 'The Experience of Values,' *Inquiry* 16 (1973).

We have invested things with ends and values: therefore we have in us an enormous fund of latent force: but by comparing values it appears that contradictory things have been accounted valuable, that *many* tables of value have existed (thus nothing is valuable 'in itself'). (WP 260)

According to the interpretive strategy suggested here, this phenomenological claim is supposed to be true of our experiences, or at least the experiences of Nietzsche's contemporaries, when engaged in the practice of valuing. In the practice of valuing Nietzsche wants to recommend for his free spirits, this phenomenology, in some form or other, will have to be saved even though his free spirits no longer believe that anything has value in itself. The suggestion here is that, again, art shows us how we can recreate this phenomenology more honestly.[39]

Imaginative play shares similar features with art. And play, too, is central in much of Nietzsche. In play, as in art, it is the creative, imaginative, wilful production of, and relishing of, illusion that is often central. In the first of Zarathustra's speeches, 'On the Three Metamorphoses', Nietzsche tells a parable about the development of the human spirit: 'how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child' (Z:1 'On the Three Metamorphoses'). The camel is the stage of the spirit in which the spirit accepts the weight of traditional schemes of valuation. Nietzsche asks:

My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? . . .

To create new values—that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation—that is within the power of the lion. . . . To assume the right to new values—that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much. (Z:1 'On the Three Metamorphoses')

And then:

But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes.' For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred 'Yes' is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world.   (Z:1 'On the Three Metamorphoses')

The final stage is that of the child. The child goes beyond the lion not merely by rejecting old values but by being capable of creating new values. The suggested reading here is that the child is to be understood as capable of forgetting not just old schemes of valuations, but also that the child, in a manner similar to the artist, can engage in the 'forgetfulness' of imaginative play and thus create a new 'game' of valuing. The

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[39] See also GS 301, TI 'Skirmishes', 24.

child 'wills his own will' by picking a new evaluational 'game' rather than allowing his own will to be guided by an externally given scheme of evaluations.[40]

Let me add a couple of more comments about the kind of pretence I think Nietzsche requires of his free spirits. Nietzsche presents us with a particular job description for regarding something as valuable, a job description that the free spirits' regarding of things as valuable must fulfil in order for them to avoid practical nihilism. The free spirits need to save the phenomenology of valuing. The pretence thus needs to generate the right kind of phenomenology. Successfully regarding something as valuable in itself requires experiencing it as an end that stands above and beyond my other desires and inclinations. There must be the appropriate connection to my action. There must be the appropriate intensity of emotion and motivation.[41] The pretence must succeed in providing me with a sense that my life has a goal and purpose. The phenomenology is thus not a matter simply of how things stand out to us in the visual field. Or, if it is, then this standing out is in part a matter of having certain kinds of emotive and motivational reactions to things.

Is there any reason to think some kind of pretence can give us all this? And if not, does some interpretive principle of charity work against the interpretation I am suggesting here? At this point we can usefully draw on Ken Walton's discussions of make-believe. In imaginative play, successfully regarding a pile of wood as the *Bismarck* under fire requires, or at least when one is, as we say, 'into' the game, engaging in certain actions, or pretend actions—ducking from the incoming shells (just tennis balls, of course), yelling at your gunners to fire back, and so on. It also requires certain physical responses: the increased heart beat, the sweating of palms, and an intense exclusive concentration. We may even want to talk about the perceptual phenomenology of the child. The pile of logs and the tennis balls have a kind of salience that they do not have to someone not engaged in the game. In fact, as we grow older we often lose the ability to regard the pile of planks as the *Bismarck* under fire. For the adult this can take some serious effort. For adults, on the other hand, the engagement with novels, movies, and art is if anything more emotionally intense than the child's. If we focus on make-believe, in particular the case where we treat

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[40] Cf. WP 797. Presumably 'picking' and not 'choosing'; the choice of evaluative pretence could not itself be determined by an evaluative fact of the matter about which pretence a free spirit should pick.

[41] This is not to say either that having a 'quasi' emotional state for every real emotional state (see the discussion of 'quasi fear' in games of make-believe in Kendall L. Walton, 'Fearing Fictions,' *The Journal of Philosophy* 75/1 (1978): 5–27), or that carrying out some action analogous to each action the agent who believed that *a* is *F* would carry out, is required in order to regard *a* as *F*. Indeed the idea that there is a straightforward scale of attitudes, emotions, and actions by which one comes closer and closer to what one would do if one believed that *a* is *F* seems mistaken (for this point, see J. L. Austin, 'Pretending,' *Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* (1958), 261–78). Besides other norms that constrain the kind of game one plays—the 'intensity' with which one pretends—the aim of playing the game will certainly determine the kind of pretence one engages in.

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ourselves as props in a game, then we may have reason to think that Nietzsche's job description for the kind of pretence his free spirits are supposed to engage in could be satisfied.[42]

Let me summarize and repeat what considering art and imaginative play is supposed to show us. Art and imaginative play each allow us to regard certain things as something else even when we know they are not. Both art and imaginative play involve a kind of make-believe. The examples of art and imaginative play are, according to Nietzsche, supposed (i) to show us the psychological possibility of regarding things as valuable even when we know that they are not, and (ii) to provide a source for techniques that, suitably refined, could help us succeed in regarding things as valuable outside the domain of art or imaginative play proper. Nietzsche's free spirits, with the help of art, are to engage in a simulacrum of valuing by regarding things as valuable in themselves while knowing that they are not.[43]

4. The Secondary Literature

Let me turn now to an inevitably brief, all-too-brief, discussion of some of the relevant secondary literature. The secondary literature does not tend to take up directly the particular interpretive puzzle I have focused on here, namely, the question of how Nietzsche's free spirits are supposed to value. As we saw, this involves getting clear on Nietzsche's metaethics, both the metaethical account of existing practices of valuing and the account of what is supposed to be the replacement practice for his free spirits.

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[42] Though we are props in the make-believe that is not yet to say that we would engage in a prop-oriented make-believe. I think it is most plausible to take the kind of make-believe involved to be a content-oriented make-believe. For the distinction between these two forms of make-believe, see Kendall L. Walton, 'Metaphor and Prop Oriented Make-Believe,' *The European Journal of Philosophy* 1/1 (1993): 39–56. Teasing out the exact kind of make-believe involved will have to await another occasion.

[43] Much more needs to be said here, of course, to make the full case for this interpretation. We would need to see how this interpretive strategy would deal with what I have called in a previous note the external interpretive puzzle. The proposed solution to the interpretive puzzle also leads to some natural questions about Nietzsche's overall position. Why do Nietzsche's free spirits need to engage in a simulacrum of valuing and why is it so important for them to face up to the truth? A full account needs to be able to provide answers to these questions which can fit with the proposed interpretive solution.

Finally, we need an articulation of what differences would emerge in practice between the original practices of valuing and the proposed fictionalist replacement. For now I can only make some suggestions in this direction. I take Nietzsche's thought to be that a particular kind of seriousness and gravity that is part of traditional morality could not be regenerated within a fictionalist practice of valuing. Instead his free spirits would be 'more ticklish and malicious, with a more delicate taste for joy, with a tenderer tongue for all good things, with merrier senses, with a second dangerous innocence in joy, more childlike and yet a hundred times subtler than one has ever been before' (GS P:4).

When it comes to discussing Nietzsche on values and valuing, the secondary literature focuses on Nietzsche's normative claims. What is the normative basis of his evaluative judgments against morality and his claims that certain types of persons are better than others? Here the Anglo-American secondary literature has almost developed an orthodoxy. The claim usually defended is that Nietzsche regards, in some sense, the degree of power as the ultimate standard of value. I will call this the *Will-to-Power Interpretation* (WPI). As Walter Kaufmann puts it 'quantitative degree of power is the measure of value'.[44]

There is indeed evidence for some such evaluative standard in Nietzsche's texts. He says in his book *Antichrist*:

What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself.
What is bad? Everything that is born of weakness.   (A 2)[45]

When we turn to Nietzsche's unpublished notes we find such a fundamental evaluative standard mentioned at least twice.[46] Now, as is perhaps obvious, WPI does

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[44] The versions of this standard that individual commentators subscribe to involve some variations, but, as can be seen from the following quotes, WPI captures the basic thrust. 'Power, then, is the standard of value which Nietzsche affirms with all the eloquence at his command' (George Allen Morgan, *What Nietzsche Means* (New York: Harper, 1965), 118). The 'quantitative degree of power is the measure of value' (Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th edn. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 200). There is 'one standard about which Nietzsche does not take a relativist position. He evaluates the worth of persons on the basis of a single standard: the degree to which they have attained what he calls power' (Lester H. Hunt, *Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 131). 'Nietzsche's advice: maximize power' (John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 148). See also John T. Wilcox, *Truth and Value in Nietzsche: A Study of His Metaethics and Epistemology* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974), 194–6, and Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 349, 98.

[45] Cf. Z:1 'On the Thousand and One Goals'.

[46] There are nonetheless some worries about the textual evidence for WPI. As Leiter points out, it is hard to understand on this reading of Nietzsche 'why he says almost nothing about will to power—and nothing at all to suggest it is his "fundamental principle"—in the two major self-reflective moments in the Nietzschean corpus: *Ecce Homo*, where he reviews and assesses his life and work, including specifically all his prior books (EH III); and the series of new prefaces he wrote for *The Birth of Tragedy, Human, All Too Human, Dawn*, and *The Gay Science* in 1886, in which he revisits his major themes. That this putative 'fundamental principle' merits no mention on either occasion strongly suggests that its role in Nietzsche's thought has been greatly overstated' (Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Metaethics', 285). Indeed much of the textual evidence for both WPI and Nietzsche's arguments for it are drawn, as Leiter points out, from the *Nachlass* (Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Metaethics', 287). For worries about the overuse of the *Nachlass*, see Leiter, 'Nietzsche's Metaethics', 287; Bernd Magnus, 'The Use and Abuse of *The Will to Power*', in Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (eds.), *Reading Nietzsche* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 218–35; R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy*, ARK edn. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 166–72, 82–6. For a defence of using the *Nachlass*, see Richard Schacht, *Making Sense of Nietzsche: Reflections Timely and Untimely* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 117–25.

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not immediately present itself as an alternative to my attempt to solve my interpretive puzzle, nor is it presented in the secondary literature as such.[47] I can accept that Nietzsche, self-declared free spirit that he is, has a fundamental evaluative standard, if that standard is taken to be part of Nietzsche's own evaluative pretence. Nietzsche regards the maximization of power as valuable while knowing that it is not.

In the spirit of searching for competing interpretations, we can nonetheless ask whether the will-to-power interpretation suggests an alternative solution to the interpretive puzzle. The secondary literature sometimes does suggest that WPI can be taken as a metaethical view.[48] Nietzsche would then be committed to a reductive realism. He is saying not merely that what is good is power, but rather that what *it is* to be good is to be powerful.

What on such an account would it be for the higher men to create values? And how would this be connected to art and illusion? The answer is not immediately obvious, but perhaps we can see how a story might go. Let's say we could give a reductive account in psychological terms of the attitudes of valuing—say of finding something beautiful. And let us say that having this attitude towards things enhances in some sense our power. To be beautiful is just to be regarded in the appropriate way. And then perhaps Nietzsche's free spirits create new values in the sense of creatively coming up with new attitudes to take towards things. Perhaps this even requires the illusions of art since it is not objects themselves, but rather an object viewed in a certain illusory way that we can have these new attitudes towards. These new values are still consistent with the reductive realism, perhaps, because the value of these new values turns on their instrumental usefulness to enhancing power.

Now this all may be a long row to hoe, but perhaps we have some sense of how such an interpretation might fulfil interpretive constraints (1), (2), and (4). This interpretation will however have a hard time satisfying constraint (3). On this interpretation it appears that power is something in nature—in the world—valuable in itself despite the fact that Nietzsche clearly says that nothing in our world or in nature has value in itself (GS 301).

Perhaps there is still a way out for this version of WPI. Power, as I have been reading Nietzsche, is a property of agents. What is being enhanced is something in us. If we are not, in some relevant sense, in the world or in nature, then Nietzsche's claims that nothing in nature or in the world has value in itself would not apply to the property of power or our will to power. But this runs up against a repeated emphasis in Nietzsche on 'naturalizing' our account of man. He describes his task as follows:

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[47] This is in part because the authors concerned do not take Nietzsche to be as thoroughgoing an error-theorist as I do.

[48] This is perhaps the case in Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*.

To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*; to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest* of nature, in intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, 'you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!' (BGE 230)

So it is hard to see Nietzsche as using the term 'nature' in a way to exclude agents. If that is right, then the claim that nothing in nature has value in itself would surely apply to features of agents too. And so a realist reduction of good to power seems hard to square with Nietzsche's claim that there is nothing in nature that has value in itself.[49]

5. Conclusion

Let me conclude by summarizing what I hope to have shown. I hope to have argued convincingly that there is an interpretive puzzle we face when we attempt to explain how Nietzsche's free spirits are supposed to create values. The interpretive puzzle was generated by four interpretive constraints that I listed and provided some textual evidence for. I then suggested that we can use the fourth interpretive constraint as a basis for developing an interpretive solution to our puzzle that takes as central the possibility of honest illusions. Nietzsche's free spirits engage in a simulacrum of valuing by regarding things as valuable in themselves while knowing that they are not.[50]

Historical Postscript

The argument in the form presented above has been in circulation for a while and has been fortunate enough to have already received some published response. Responding to the criticisms of Lanier Anderson and John Richardson would require comparative

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assessments of their interpretations of the same stretches of Nietzsche's texts with my above interpretation.[51] For reasons of space these tasks cannot be taken on here. Instead I will use this postscript to respond to Brian Leiter's charge of anachronism. He writes:

Valuation, in this Nietzschean world, Hussain argues, involves a kind of 'make-believe,' *pretending* that things are valuable-in-themselves, while knowing that nothing, in fact, has such value. There is a pressing philosophical question here—whether 'make-believe' about value really could suffice for valuing—but also an interpretive problem: does Nietzsche *really* think that moral judgments express *beliefs*, that is, truth-apt propositional attitudes which then requires [sic] fictionalist treatment? It would be astonishing if any 19th-century philosopher were to have a *clear* answer to such a question.[52]

Whether or not my interpretation is anachronistic depends on two things: what kind of fictionalist view I am ascribing to Nietzsche and what kind of fictionalist views it is plausible to think a nineteenth-century philosopher could have. I will start by reviewing the kinds of fictionalism that were present in the nineteenth century. The presence of these fictionalist views shows, I shall argue, that ascribing a fictionalist view to Nietzsche would not be anachronistic. Indeed, given the historical context, it would hardly come as a surprise.

However, I presume that Leiter is interested in a more specific question, namely, whether fictionalism understood in a very specific, contemporary sense is plausibly ascribable to Nietzsche without anachronism. Such a fictionalism involves a denial of non-cognitivism. I will argue that the historical record shows that it would not be anachronistic to ascribe even this kind of fictionalism to nineteenth-century philosophers as long as we are willing to take talk of 'belief' or 'truth' and 'falsity' as signs of a commitment to cognitivism despite the lack of consideration of non-cognitivist alternatives. Furthermore, the historical evidence does suggest precisely what we need for fictionalism, in the sense that needs to be ascribed to Nietzsche, namely an attitude other than belief towards the same content—an attitude such that whether the content is false is no longer relevant.

One could argue, however, in the spirit of contemporary non-cognitivists like Allan Gibbard and Simon Blackburn, that just as talk of 'belief' or 'truth' and 'falsity' should not be taken as evidence that ordinary moral discourse is cognitivist, we should not take the use of such language by a philosopher as evidence that he or she is committed

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to cognitivism.[53] Whatever plausibility the claim has for our ordinary moral practice, I think the plausibility decreases when we are talking about nineteenth-century philosophers many of whom do make what sound for all the world like semantic claims. Nonetheless, if this contemporary non-cognitivist point is insisted on, then there will still remain, I shall argue, a form of fictionalism that I would want to ascribe to Nietzsche and that is compatible with both cognitivism and non-cognitivism.

Before I proceed it will help the exposition below to remind ourselves of some relevant distinctions. First, there is a useful distinction to be drawn between 'hermeneutic' and 'revolutionary' fictionalism.[54] A hermeneutic fictionalist interprets the current discourse in fictionalist terms while the revolutionary fictionalist proposes fictionalism as a reform. Revolutionary fictionalism combines most naturally with an error theory about our existing discourse. I have basically argued for ascribing a form of revolutionary fictionalism to Nietzsche. As we will see, the nineteenth century gives us examples of both hermeneutic and revolutionary fictionalisms. Second, it is useful to remind ourselves of the distinction for certain kinds of language, such as fictionalist and metaphorical language, between the literal content and the content that is conveyed: David Hills usefully puts the point in terms of a distinction between the 'presented thought . . . entertained in a spirit of assertion' and the 'presenting thought . . . entertained in a spirit of *pretence*'.[55]

Now for the quick historical tour. We can begin with Jeremy Bentham who worked on fictionalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century mostly in the context of developing a theory that would provide resources for giving fictionalist accounts of legal and moral terms such as 'duty', 'obligation', 'property', 'right', though, as can be seen from the example used to introduce the theory below, fictionalism was not restricted to this domain of terms:

A fictitious entity is an entity to which, though by the grammatical form of the discourse employed in speaking of it, existence be ascribed, yet in truth and reality existence is not meant to be ascribed.

Ever noun-substantive which is not the name of a real entity, perceptible or inferential, is the name of a fictitious entity . . . .

To be spoken of at all, every fictitious entity must be spoken of as if it were real. . . .

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[53] Allan Gibbard, *Thinking How to Live* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) and Simon Blackburn, *Ruling Passions: A Theory of Practical Reasoning* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1998).

[54] John P. Burgess and Gideon A. Rosen, *A Subject with No Object: Strategies for Nominalistic Interpretation of Mathematics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6–7, and Jason Stanley, 'Hermeneutic Fictionalism', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 25 (2001): 36. See also John P. Burgess, 'Why I Am Not a Nominalist', *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 24 (1983): 93–105.

[55] David Hills, 'Aptness and Truth in Verbal Metaphor', *Philosophical Topics* 25/1 (1997): 147.

A body is said to be in motion. This, taken in the literal sense, is as much as to say—Here is a larger body, called a motion; in this larger body, the other body, namely, the really existing body, is contained.[56]

The similarity of the view to contemporary hermeneutic fictionalist strategies of philosophers like Mark Crimmins, Ken Walton, and Stephen Yablo is, I think, pretty clear.[57] Bentham's overall view is quite complicated and sophisticated. In some cases, he deploys an error theory to argue for rejection. In others he declares the practice to be pernicious as it stands because the participants believe in the relevant entities, but argues that the practice would be acceptable and useful if the entities were treated as fictions, thus advocating revolutionary fictionalism. Cases where fictionalism is acceptable are cases where the presented thought is worth presenting and where it is hard to see how it could be presented without a presenting thought that is literally false.

In the German nineteenth-century context, fictionalism plays a central role both in Hegelian critiques of traditional Christianity like those of David Friedrich Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach, and also in the work of neo-Kantians like Friedrich Lange and Hans Vaihinger. German readings of the Christian religion as 'myth' came to prominence with David Friedrich Strauss's *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1835–6). Strauss did not claim that readings of the biblical narratives as myth were original to him.[58] Strauss's

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[56] Jeremy Bentham, *Bentham's Theory of Fictions*, ed. C. K. Ogden (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner & Co., 1932), 12–13.

[57] See Mark Crimmins, 'Hesperus and Phosphorus: Sense, Pretense, and Reference', *Philosophical Review* 107/1 (1998): 1–47; Kendall Walton, 'Existence as Metaphor?', in Anthony J. Everett and Thomas Hofweber (eds.), *Empty Names, Fiction, and the Puzzles of Non-Existence* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2000), 69–94; and Stephen Yablo, 'A Paradox of Existence', in Anthony J. Everett and Thomas Hofweber (eds.), *Empty Names, Fiction, and the Puzzles of Non-Existence* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2000), 275–312.

[58] David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot, 6th edn. (London: George Allen, 1913), §8–9, §14:81–2. For a useful study of the use of myth in interpretations of the Bible, see Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1952). For more discussion of the degree of originality of Strauss's position, see Horton Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 259–71. Strauss distinguishes his use of the notion of myth in biblical exegesis from his predecessors both in terms of the extensiveness of his application of this strategy and in terms of his distinction between mythical explanation and various forms of rationalist explanations (Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, §10–12, §14:80–2, §15–16). The Old Testament had often been treated as myth; however, rationalist readings tended to still treat some of the Gospels of the New Testament as having apostolic authorship and thus as eye-witness reports. Strauss treated all of the New Testament as myth. Rationalist readings, in the sense intended here, were interpretations that attempted to explain away references to, for example, miracles by providing naturalistic explanations for the events described as miracles. Both naturalists and rationalists deployed naturalistic explanations; however, naturalists, as used here, deployed explanations that were morally undermining of religious figures and their followers: their explanations involved claims of deceit and manipulation. Rationalists, on the other hand, attempted to provide naturalistic accounts that did not ascribe anything morally reprehensible to the historical figures involved (Strauss, *Life of*

phenomenal impact is best explained by the thoroughness of application of the notion of myth and the level of detailed support presented.[59] These myths were the result of an unconscious and unintentional poetizing as opposed to intentional deception. For Strauss, the claims of biblical texts literally interpreted were false. The common believer accepted the literal interpretation and thus his or her beliefs were also false.[60] A central reason for taking biblical texts as myths, and thus as literally false, was the impossibility of the truth of the literal claims being compatible with the current naturalistic picture of the world as a closed causal system.[61]

So far we have been given what looks like a straight error theory. However, for Strauss, the mythical language was a poetic or figurative representation of certain philosophical truths, for Strauss certain Hegelian claims. The sophisticated interpreter who realized that the literal interpretations were false could take these myths as fictions, but as fictions that figuratively expressed what Strauss considered to be true philosophical claims.[62] The theologian can still talk about the resurrection of Christ. Such talk still makes rational sense because, to use Hills's language, the presented thought—a Hegelian truth about the relation between humanity as a whole and Absolute Spirit—is something the theologian believes in, while the presenting thought—the claim that a historical individual was resurrected—is something the theologian does not actually believe in. Viewed this way the theologian is 'in himself no hypocrite' just as I am no hypocrite when, to use Yablo's favorite example, I say of an athlete who is playing very well, 'Jim is on fire'.[63] As Strauss realizes, though, the question of hypocrisy becomes more complicated when the speaker knows that his audience does not share his fictionalist attitude. If I know that my audience will come

Jesus, §6:47-§6:48, §8:52−4). According to Strauss, the rationalist is mistaken in taking the fundamental function of the text to be the reporting of historical events. Such rationalist accounts failed to explain the occurrence of supposedly similar notions of the relation between God and the world that recurred in different religious settings—that perhaps even defined the religious (Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, §1:39−§4:43, §6:47, §7:51, §8:52, 56, §14:75−8, 80−2; see also Edwina Lawler, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Critics: The Life of Jesus Debate in Early 19. Century German Journals* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 22−32, 37, 42).

[59] Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, xxix, §4−5; Otto Pfleiderer, 'Introduction to *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*', in David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (London: George Allen & Co., Ltd., 1913), pp. xi−xii; Lawler, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Critics*, 22−39, 44; Marilyn Chapin Massey, 'Introduction to *In Defense of My "Life of Jesus" Against the Hegelians*', in David Friedrich Strauss, *In Defense of My Life of Jesus against the Hegelians* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1983), p. xi; Richard Sidney Cromwell, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Place in Modern Thought* (Fair Lawn, NJ: R. E. Burdick: 1974), 68−9. For a useful, brief summary of Strauss's mythical interpretation of religion see Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1950), 82−4.

[60] Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, §13:69. See also Massey, 'Introduction to *In Defense of My 'Life of Jesus' Against the Hegelians*', p. iv.

[61] Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, §16:88. In earlier editions, Hegelian commitments play a greater role in driving the interpretation.

[62] Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, §151−2.   [63] Ibid. §152:782−3.

to believe that Jim is literally on fire, then it does not seem sufficient for me to defend such an utterance by insisting that I do not believe it. For Strauss this is a matter of tremendous importance for the theologians he is concerned about are also preachers whose audience 'can conceive no faith in the dogmatical truth of the resurrection of Christ, for example, apart from a conviction of its historical reality: and if it comes to discover that the theologian has not this conviction, and yet preaches on the resurrection, he must appear in the eyes of the church a hypocrite'.[64] Knowing this, the theologian must 'ultimately appear a hypocrite to himself'.[65] I interpret Strauss as in the end granting that there is no way to eliminate some kind of hypocrisy here; what can justify the theologian's continuing to preach is that though he uses 'the forms of the popular conception' he is trying slowly to get his audience to believe in the presented Hegelian truths rather than the presenting falsehoods.[66] Strauss's revolutionary fictionalism is thus revolutionary for the Hegelian theologian, but, so to speak, rather gradualist for the rest of the population. I emphasize these concerns with the situation of the theologian because these are precisely the concerns that should arise if one is proposing a revolutionary fictionalism—they thus are further evidence of the fictionalism.

Not surprisingly, Strauss's book was met with a fire-storm of controversy; the error theory was all that was discussed and the fictionalism was merely regarded as hypocrisy. Strauss was dismissed from his post as a tutor at the Tübingen seminary, never again to be appointed to a teaching post let alone a ministerial appointment, and it was no surprise to some that 'the Hebrew letters forming Strauss' name added up to 666'.[67] This level of controversy was if anything surpassed by the reaction to Ludwig Feuerbach's work. Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1841) went beyond Strauss by rejecting Strauss's Hegelianism and thus even the Hegelian replacement for the traditional Christian God, namely, Absolute Spirit. Famously, according to Feuerbach, religion and theology are really anthropology. God is a projection of idealized human qualities.[68] Similarly, other traditional parts of Christianity, the Trinity, Resurrection, and so on are all in various ways about humans and their relations to each other. For example, 'the true unfalsified import of the Incarnation' is 'absolute pure love'—love of humans for other humans 'which impels the sacrifice of self to another'.[69] Thus 'religion—consciousness of God—is . . . the self-consciousness of man'.[70] This

is not to be understood as affirming that the religious man is directly aware of this identity; for, on the contrary, ignorance of it is fundamental to the peculiar nature of religion . . . religion is

[64] Ibid. §152:783.   [65] Ibid.   [66] Ibid.   [67] Harris, *Strauss*, 67.

[68] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1989), 14.

[69] Ibid. 53.   [70] Ibid. 13.

man's earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge. Hence, religion everywhere precedes philosophy.... Man first of all sees his nature as if *out of* himself, before he finds it in himself.[71]

What Feuerbach's view shares with hermeneutical fiction is the idea that there is both a presented thought and a presenting thought. As Feuerbach puts it:

Religion is the dream of the human mind. But even in dreams we do not find ourselves in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality; we only see real things in the entrancing splendour of imagination and caprice, instead of in the simple daylight of reality and necessity. Hence I do nothing more to religion ... than to open its eyes ..., *i.e.*, I change the object as it is in the imagination into the object as it is in reality.[72]

There is a sense then in which Eugene Kamenka is right that for Feuerbach

Religion has to be explained and analysed as a natural, human phenomenon—as a false belief, or, on the positive side, as a fiction.... Religion is to be treated on the analogy of dreams, fantasies, works of fiction or imaginative art.... We look at them and we ask, 'Where did their creator get the idea?' and 'What is it that he wants to express?'[73]

However, Kamenka plays down the disanalogies. Clearly for Feuerbach religion involves 'ignorance', it involves the mistake of believing the presenting thought. Feuerbach still has a role to play in our story of nineteenth-century fictionalism because his approach shares two features of contemporary fictionalisms, hermeneutical or revolutionary: first, the two levels of content; and, second, the strategy of giving an entire discourse an error-theoretic reading.

It was the above critique of Hegelianism and Christianity within the theological context of the writings of Strauss and Feuerbach that partly led to the demise of Hegelian idealism and the rise both of materialism and—partly in reaction to materialism—neo-Kantianism in the later half of the nineteenth century.[74] For obvious reasons, I will focus here on the neo-Kantian Friedrich Lange.[75] Lange thinks that the 'great mass of believers of all religions' are 'in a state of mind like that in which children listen to fairy-tales'; however, 'all poesy and revelation are simply false, as soon as we test their material contents by the standard of exact knowledge' and so 'the classification of religion with art and metaphysics, will at no very distant time be generally conceded'. The demise of religion does threaten to undermine

[71] Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, 13.   [72] Ibid., p. xxxix.

[73] Eugene Kamenka, *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 59.

[74] Cf. Frederick Gregory, *Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1977), p. xi; Kamenka, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, 92; and Hans D. Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 9–14.

[75] Jorg Salaquarda, 'Nietzsche und Lange', *Nietzsche-Studien* 7 (1978): 236–53; Jörg Salaquarda, 'Der Standpunkt des Ideals bei Lange und Nietzsche', *Studi Tedeschi* 22/1 (1979): 133–60; and George J. Stack, *Lange and Nietzsche* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983).

moral commitment as a matter of contingent, sociological fact. However, the coming realization that religion, and other moral ideals, are fairy-tales does not mean that 'the sense for poesy' is not important even when we are, so to speak, adults: 'if we could entirely abolish this poesy, it is a question whether anything would be left to make life worth living'.[76] Rather than the unintentional poetry that lead to the myths of religion and metaphysics we need an intentional '*Begriffsdichtung*'—'concept poetry'—the imaginative creation of conceptual structures. If we are to overcome our narrow interests and encourage morality, 'then myth asserts its rights'.[77] Lange declares, 'One thing is certain, that man needs to supplement reality by an ideal world of his own creation'.[78] If we in fact had knowledge about how reality is in itself, then the construction of this ideal world, these myths, would be irresponsible since it is reality that should guide us rather than some imaginary construction of our own. Fortunately, 'No thought is so calculated to reconcile poesy and science as the thought that all our "reality"—without any prejudice to its strict connexion, undisturbed by any caprice—is only *appearance*.'[79] This he takes to be Kant's lesson. Nonetheless, if we were actually to believe in our imaginary constructions, then these constructions would be susceptible to destruction by a critique that pointed out that they had no connection to reality. Instead:

We have no doubt of another solution of the problem, especially in Germany, since we have in the philosophical poems of Schiller a performance which unites with the noblest vigour of thought the highest elevation above reality, and which lends to the ideal an overpowering force by removing it openly and unhesitatingly into the realm of fantasy.[80]

'Free poetry' can thus 'without doing violence to the facts ... entirely leave the ground of reality and make use of myth.'[81] People cannot do without something that plays the 'core' role of religion. Myth by its 'conscious elevation above reality' can play this role. It can thus block what would be an otherwise inevitable return to 'superstition' and the 'falsification of reality' despite all the enlightenment brought by philosophy and science.[82]

For my purposes, his emphasis on how intentional 'concept poetry' can help us avoid falsification is particularly important because of what I take to be Nietzsche's similar interest in how illusions can be honest. And Lange is well aware, as I think Nietzsche is, that it is not easy to get these honest illusions to play the role they are supposed to. As Lange grants, 'This advice will indeed appear to many an old or even

[76] Friedrich Albert Lange, *The History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance*, 3rd edn. (New York: Humanities Press, 1950), III:280–5. In this section I draw on Nadeem J. Z. Hussain, 'Friedrich Albert Lange', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2005 Edition)*, URL=<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2005/entries/friedrich-lange/>.

[77] Lange, *Materialism*, III:299.   [78] Ibid. III:342.   [79] Ibid. II:234. See also Ibid. III:342.

[80] Ibid. III:343.   [81] Ibid. III:343.   [82] Ibid. III:344–6.

new believer, as if we were to draw the ground from beneath his feet and ask him to remain standing as though nothing had happened.'[83] Nonetheless, Lange's is basically a case of revolutionary fictionalism.[84]

It is Lange's neo-Kantian argument for the freedom to create new conceptual schemes and his emphasis on the fortunate irrefutability of fictions that Nietzsche trumpets in his letter to Carl von Gersdorff. After stating Lange's neo-Kantian conclusions about appearance and reality, Nietzsche writes, 'Consequently, Lange thinks, one leaves the philosophers free, assuming that they continue to edify us. Art is free also in the domain of concepts. Who would refute a phrase by Beethoven, and who would find an error in Raphael's Madonna?'[85] The last line is essentially a quotation from the penultimate page of Lange's discussion of the 'Standpoint of the Ideal', though the Beethoven example replaces a Mass of Palestrina in the original.[86]

Finally, let me just conclude this historical survey with the reminder that Hans Vaihinger's famous defence of fictionalism, *The Philosophy of 'As If'*, was basically written by the end of the 1870s even though it was not published till 1911. The first part of the eventual book was submitted as his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1877.[87] Perhaps not surprisingly, Vaihinger had sent a brief, unsolicited description of his fictionalism to Lange in the hopes of encouragement. Despite the advanced state of Lange's cancer—he was to die that year—Lange replied: 'Although a difficult illness prevents me from almost any correspondence, I would like nonetheless to express with a few words my complete agreement with the thoughts you have taken up.'[88] Indeed, it was Vaihinger's reading of Nietzsche at the end of the 1890s, whom he regarded as drawing on the same sources of inspiration as himself—Schopenhauer and Lange—that was one of the things that convinced him that the world was ready for his *Philosophy of 'As If'*.[89] Given

[83] Lange, *Materialism*, III:346.

[84] His final view is more complicated. Among other things he suspects that 'the wise' even in past times did not really believe the dogmas of religion and that an awareness of the falsity of religion must have been present 'at least dimly in the consciousness of the people also'. Otherwise, how, he asks, could poets and philosophers, Greek, Roman and Catholic, have got away with taking such liberties with 'the material of religion'? (Lange, *Materialism*, III:346–7). For warnings against too much revolutionary fervor and arguments for gradualism, see ibid. III:355–6, 358.

[85] August 1866, *KGB* I/2:160; translation in Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 18. The translation in the text is mine.

[86] Lange, *Materialism*, 360.

[87] Hans Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des als ob: System der theoretischen, praktischen und religiösen Fiktionen der Menschheit auf Grund eines idealistischen Positivismus*, 5th and 6th edns. (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1920), p. ii.

[88] Lange's letter of 16 May 1875 is quoted in Vaihinger, *Philosophie des als ob*, p. xiii. For Vaihinger's letter of 9 May 1875, see Friedrich Albert Lange, *Über Politik und Philosophie: Briefe und Leitartikel 1862 bis 1875*, ed. Georg Eckert (Duisburg: Walter Braun Verlag, 1968), 354–5.

[89] Vaihinger, *Philosophie des als ob*, pp. iii–iv, xiv–xv. The reasons for not publishing sooner are varied. In part Vaihinger put aside the manuscript to work on his massive commentary on Kant's *Critique of*

the very large gap of time between conception and publication, Vaihinger wrote an 'Editor's Foreword' to the first edition since he regarded his current self as in some ways merely the editor of a work produced by a much earlier self.

Thus it seems to me that fictionalism was very much part of the nineteenth-century philosophical landscape. No doubt there was much work that remained to be done. Consider, for example, the long list of different expressions that Vaihinger borrows and uses to point to whatever is supposed to be the alternative to believing something: as-if-acceptance (*Als-Ob-Annahmen*), conscious fictions, as-if-consideration (*Als-Ob-Betrachtung*), conscious self-deception (*bewussten Selbsttäuschung*), as-if-attitude (*Als Ob-Einstellung*), or, in English, 'the consciously-false judgments'. There is no standardization here, but there is some attempt to outline the alternative to believing something—one should remember that in fact there is not that much more standardization or articulation of what this attitude comes to today. Furthermore, what the attitude of belief, and this alternative attitude, is directed towards is something that can be true or false. The whole concern here is to ensure that by changing our attitude we avoid having a false belief.

It was, I suspect, the logical positivists' concerns with empiricism about content that led to the demise of nineteenth-century fictionalism. For the regions of discourse that fictionalism was most naturally applied to—for example, religious discourse—providing a reduction of the purported content to something that was verifiable seemed impossible and so the tendency was to take the purported claims of apparently ontologically problematic discourse as meaningless rather than false.[90] In turn, I would suggest, the easing of empiricist worries about content has led to the return of fictionalism. Gideon Rosen sums up the current situation well:

Fictionalism has undergone a revival lately in a variety of domains. Time was, when an indispensable region of discourse began to look ontologically problematic, the first philosophical response was reductionism: 'Sure, we seem to be saying that there are *F*s, but all we really mean is . . . ' But for various reasons of detail and principle the more ambitious reductionism programs tend not to work out. And at this point the best alternative to realism about the objects in question is fictionalism. The discourse is to be interpreted literally or 'at face value'; so our theories are true only if the problematic objects exist. We skirt a commitment to those objects simply by denying that the theories are true. They are good and we accept them. But goodness isn't truth, and acceptance is not belief. And that's why we

Pure Reason from 1879 to 1892. This project allowed him to support himself financially. The commentary was followed by the effort of setting up the journal *Kantstudien* (Vaihinger, *Philosophie des als ob*, pp. ii–v). Supposedly it was working out the section on Nietzsche's fictionalism that also took a large amount of time Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of 'As If'*, trans. C. K. Ogden, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1935), pp. xl–xli.

[90] Cf. Arthur Fine, 'Fictionalism,' *Midwest Studies* 18 (1993): 3.

don't inherit the obnoxious commitments of the theories we use or the languages we speak.[91]

Contemporary fictionalism is a return, for better or for worse, to a standard approach to ontologically problematic domains that was widespread in the nineteenth century.

Now, as I have suggested already, one could argue that despite the apparently cognitivist language that these nineteenth-century thinkers were using we do not have sufficient grounds to ascribe to them a form of cognitivism let alone fictionalism. Perhaps because they lack the philosophical resources to articulate a non-cognitivist alternative we should not see them as even implicitly denying this alternative. Perhaps in the spirit of contemporary metaethicists' arguments for non-cognitivism, just as the apparent cognitivist language of ordinary moral discourse is not to be taken as settling the question of whether cognitivism is the correct account of ordinary moral discourse, we should not take the use of cognitivist language by nineteenth-century philosophers as settling whether they were cognitivists. I find both arguments unconvincing, but will not try to take them on here. Rather I want to point out that even if we accept them, as long as we countenance contemporary non-cognitivist theories, there would still be space for an interesting form of fictionalism to ascribe to Nietzsche. Recall that the kind of non-cognitivism that Blackburn or Gibbard defend, allows for talk of moral facts and beliefs. Such forms of non-cognitivism allow us to say, for example, that there are no moral facts and that all moral beliefs are false. Now it is true that non-cognitivists do not usually talk about pretence, but they will have to have some theory of pretence to account, for example, for what morally decent actors are doing when playing Caligula. Assuming they can provide such an account, we would then be able to ascribe revolutionary fictionalism—error theory plus replacement fictionalist practice—to Nietzsche without having to assign to him any view about the semantics of moral claims. The point here is just the standard one: if cognitivist language does not settle in favor of non-cognitivism for the reasons contemporary non-cognitivists give—namely that such language is compatible with non-cognitivism—then ascribing some view to a thinker using such language, for example, ascribing fictionalism to Nietzsche, does not have to involve ascribing a denial of non-cognitivism.[92]

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[91] Gideon Rosen, 'What is Constructive Empiricism?', *Philosophical Studies* 74/2 (1994): 168.

[92] For an extended discussion of these issues, see Nadeem J. Z. Hussain and Nishi Shah, 'Metaethics and its Discontents: A Case Study of Korsgaard' (MS, 2005).

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