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In NIETZSCHE, NATURALISM, & NORMATIVITY, edited by Simon Robertson and Christopher Janaway, 111–132. Oxford University Press, 2012.

5

Nietzsche and Non-cognitivism

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1. INTRODUCTION

Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick have recently defended an interpretation of Nietzsche according to which he has a non-cognitivist metaethics (Clark and Dudrick 2007). I will argue that they have failed to show that Nietzsche was committed to non-cognitivism. This will require laying out their argument for the non-cognitivist reading in some detail since I will in part have to show that much of the complicated story this article tells about Nietzsche can be set aside for the purposes of assessing whether Nietzsche is a non-cognitivist.

2. ARTICULATING NON-COGNITIVISM

Let me begin however with emphasizing that we need to agree on what we mean by calling a metaethical theory a non-cognitivist theory. The term 'non-cognitivism' is not exactly ordinary English and the requirement that there be some kind of rejection of something called cognitivism—itself a rather non-ordinary term of course—hardly constrains legitimate applications of the term. I will be assuming that Clark and Dudrick do intend to use the term 'non-cognitivism' to pick out the kind of theories that have come to be so identified in recent 'analytic' metaethics. I take this to be clearly implied by the repeated references in their work to the writings of Simon Blackburn and Allan Gibbard.

Non-cognitivist theories of this kind are essentially theories about the semantics of normative language. The meaning of normative language is given by the role of such language in expressing certain non-cognitive states. A non-cognitive state is contrasted with a cognitive state, a state that purports to represent the world as being a certain way—a belief as we would normally put it. This, then, is the kind of non-cognitivism I take Clark and Dudrick to be ascribing to Nietzsche.

I have defended elsewhere the claim that Nietzsche is committed to an error theory about existing ethical discourse.¹ I also argued that we should see Nietzsche as suggesting a replacement fictionalist practice (Hussain 2007). Others have ascribed to Nietzsche forms of cognitivist subjectivism, at least for claims of prudential goodness (Leiter 2002). I mention these alternatives just to remind you that, in the first instance, the interpretive task currently facing us is one of deciding which metaethical position, if any, fits best with Nietzsche's texts as opposed to, for example, finding Nietzschean proof texts that might be consistent with any particular metaethical position. In order to carry out this task then, we need a clear picture of the essential, but sometimes subtle, differences between these metaethical views and an idea of what kind of texts would support ascribing one metaethical view to Nietzsche over another.²

Some examples will help here. Consider the following simple-minded metaethical error theories. When people say things of the form 'killing innocents is wrong' they are expressing a belief. They believe that the act of killing innocents has a special property of wrongness. This property—indeed this kind of property—is so special that it cannot be a natural property. As John Mackie put it, it is a very queer property. Unfortunately, to cut a long story short, science tells us there are only natural properties. Thus these beliefs are all false, or at least the positive, atomic ones are.

Or imagine that our metaethicist tells us that as a matter of semantic fact believing that killing innocents is wrong is just believing that God commanded us to not kill innocents. Unfortunately, our metaethicist continues, God does not exist and so did not command anything. Again all our moral beliefs—positive, atomic ones at least—are false. Again we have an error theory.

Now the first crucial thing to note for our purposes is that there are certain claims about the expression of non-cognitive states that our error theorist can go on to make that *do not* make him or her into a non-cognitivist in the sense under consideration here.

Take our first error theorist, the one who thought that moral properties were special, very special—indeed so special they did not exist or were not instantiated. Now we might raise the following challenge to this error theorist: if these properties do not exist, then why do people go around calling things wrong? What is the point of this practice? Our error theorist might respond as follows: killing innocents causes lots of pain and suffering. It is hardly surprising, for all the obvious reasons evolutionary and otherwise, that humans have negative feelings towards killing innocents. These negative feelings partly explain why they call such killings wrong. Indeed, they *express* these negative feelings towards the killing of innocents by calling such killings wrong.

¹ As opposed, that is, to the normative and evaluative discourse Nietzsche is recommending for the future—or so I argue.

² Or, of course, deciding that no metaethical view is appropriate.

Now when this error theorist uses the word 'express' in this context she means it in a very straightforward, ordinary sense of the term. If you ask me whether Professor Smith is a good pedagogue and I reply by saying, 'He's never around to help his students', then, under most normal circumstances, I will have *expressed* a negative attitude towards Professor Smith. However this expression of a negative attitude is in addition to the expression of a straightforward, non-evaluative, cognitive belief, namely, the belief that Smith is never around to help his students. The sentence is straightforwardly about a certain descriptive fact: the fact that Smith is never around to help his students. The semantics for judgements like this is *not* given by reference to the non-cognitive attitude of disapproval that it can also be used to express. Thus that a claim is sometimes used to express emotions does not give us reason to give a non-cognitive account of the semantics of that claim in the manner of contemporary metaethical non-cognitivism.

Indeed, even if a particular sentence always seems to be used to express, in the everyday sense, a non-cognitive attitude, we are not required to give a non-cognitivist account of its semantics. In contemporary society, a sentence of the form 'John is short' may always be expressing—however slightly—a negative attitude towards the relevant person's height. The negative attitude seems to be expressed even when there may be an explicitly positive claim about the height being made. Take the example of the leader of the pack of thieves who looks at John and says: 'He's short. He can get through the air duct'. Some *positive* non-cognitive attitude is also being expressed, but it is hard not to hear the negative one.

Of course this is why the traditional emphasis has been on necessity: the judgement *necessarily* expresses a non-cognitive attitude. And *this*, so the non-cognitivist argues, can only be explained if the very role of the judgement is to express the non-cognitive attitude. The judgement's meaning is to be given by reference to its role in expressing this *non-cognitive* attitude. The upshot should be clear: believing in non-cognitivism requires thinking that the expression of a non-cognitive attitude is, in the relevant sense, necessary and requires thinking that the role of the judgement in question is to express the relevant non-cognitive attitude. Thus we can only ascribe non-cognitivism to a theorist if we think that he or she has these quite specific semantic commitments as part of his or her theory.

Recall that our error theorist posited an explanation for why we go around making evaluative and normative claims, such as 'killing innocents is wrong', even though such claims are false: we use these claims, he would say, to put psychological pressure on each other. I have already mentioned how we might do this by expressing negative feelings, but the error theorist could also suggest that we do it by implicitly issuing prescriptions or commands. Thus, again, though talk of prescription in metaethics is associated with the non-cognitivism of both R. M. Hare and Allan Gibbard, our error theorist does not have to be committed to anything like their distinctive semantic views. Think, as usual, of the wonderfully annoying comment that the kindergarten teacher makes to the new pupil:

'We take our shoes off in the hallway'. Despite its prescriptivist use, it does not need to get a non-cognitivist semantics.

Again, the point is that ascribing non-cognitivism to someone will require ascribing very specific semantic claims.

3. PARING DOWN CLARK AND DUDRICK'S ARGUMENT

With these preliminaries in hand—preliminaries that were meant to emphasize the kind of interpretive work that will need to be done in order to ascribe contemporary metaethical non-cognitivism to someone—I will now turn to Clark and Dudrick's argument for ascribing non-cognitivism to Nietzsche. As the title of the article indicates, 'Nietzsche and moral objectivity: the development of Nietzsche's metaethics', Clark and Dudrick tell a developmental story. They grant that Nietzsche was an error theorist about all evaluative and normative judgements in *Human, All-too-Human*, but they claim that by the time of the first edition of *The Gay Science*, he gives up his error theory because he gives up cognitivism (Clark and Dudrick 2007: 193). The positive evidence for this is essentially a proposed reading of certain passages from *The Gay Science* including, centrally, 1, 7, 299, and 301.

As presented, though, their full theory of what is going on in Nietzsche's texts is rather more complicated. In this section I am going to argue that much of this additional complexity can be put aside for the purposes of assessing whether metaethical non-cognitivism should be ascribed to Nietzsche. We will be able to put it aside because the additional complexity is driven by a failed attempt to provide Nietzsche with a form of non-cognitivism that would supposedly provide normative judgements with more objectivity than they have according to standard, contemporary, metaethical non-cognitivism. Once we have put aside this attempt, and the interpretive complexities it brings in its wake, we will be able to assess in the next section in a more straightforward manner the degree to which the relevant passages support a non-cognitivist reading.

We will work our way towards their more complicated interpretive story, and the kind of objectivity they aspire to on the behalf of Nietzsche, by beginning with their attempt to provide a new reading of a passage that seems to them to support their competitors. The passage is *GS* 301:

(NQ1) What distinguishes the higher human beings from the lower is that the former see and hear immeasurably more, and see and hear thoughtfully... But [the higher man] can never shake off a *delusion*: He fancies that he is a *spectator* and *listener* who has been placed before the great visual and acoustic spectacle that is life; he calls his own nature *contemplative* and overlooks that he himself is really the poet who keeps creating this life... We who think and feel at the same time are those who really continually *fashion* something that had not been there before: the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, accents, perspectives, scales, affirmations, and negations... 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 gave and bestowed it. Only we have created the world *that concerns man!* (*GS* 301)

They grant that this passage naturally suggests a subjectivist reading. Indeed I also granted this in my defence of interpreting Nietzsche as an error theorist and a fictionalist (Hussain 2007: 160–1). There I spent some time arguing against a subjectivist reading of this passage (161–3). In my response to Reginster's book, 'Metaethics and nihilism in Reginster's *The Affirmation of Life*', I consider in detail the pairwise comparison of an error-theoretic/fictionalist interpretation and a subjectivist interpretation of Nietzsche and argue that the error-theoretic/fictionalist reading comes out ahead (Hussain 2012). Clark and Dudrick, however, want to provide an alternative to both error theory and subjectivism by giving us a non-cognitivist reading of this passage. What they are most concerned about is avoiding what they consider to be a philosophically implausible subjectivism. They want to ensure that according to Nietzsche 'things are objectively valuable, that their value does not depend on our attitudes toward them' (207).

Now there is a standard and obvious way in which a contemporary non-cognitivist in metaethics would interpret *GS* 301 were she concerned to show that this passage was actually a presentation of a non-cognitivist view like her own. The contemporary non-cognitivist would read this passage as just making the basic non-cognitivist point—the point on which he or she agrees with the error-theorist—that the fundamental ontology of the universe is one of natural, descriptive properties. There are no normative or evaluative properties out there in nature that humans have learnt, somehow, to track just as they have learnt to track size and shape and mass and so on: 'nature is always value-less' (*GS* 301). When we call something good, for example, we are not—I simplify away from some of the complexity of contemporary non-cognitivism—ascribing some property to the thing, not even a relational property to my psychological states as the subjectivist would have it. Rather I am expressing some non-cognitive attitude of mine. Of course, once I am in the business of using normative language—and thus in the business of expressing these attitudes—I can certainly say that such and such is good. However, again, all that is going on when I say that is that I am expressing some positive non-cognitive attitude towards the object. My judgement is not about some evaluative fact independently out there in the world. In this sense, then, the non-cognitivist would grant that we have '*given* value' to nature and '*created* the world' of valuations.

Why is this not subjectivism? The standard non-cognitivist line is two-fold: first, there is no reduction of normative or evaluative facts to subjective, psychological facts. The non-cognitivist is simply doing away with normative facts and so can hardly be accused of reducing them.³ Second, for the non-cognitivist, the

³ Again contemporary forms of non-cognitivism are more complex; they allow for talk of normative facts, but they give a non-cognitivist account of what one is saying when one says that

form of subjectivism that they really want to avoid is one in which the following kind of conditional is true:

(1) If *S* desires/approves of/likes *x*, then *x* is valuable/right/good.

Recall Clark and Dudrick's phrase for the kind of objectivism they want: the value of things 'does not depend on our attitudes toward them' (207). The conditional in (1) is thus one possible statement of the kind of subjectivism that Clark and Dudrick want to avoid. In any case, it is certainly the kind of denial of objectivism that contemporary non-cognitivism are concerned to avoid.

What is crucial to see is how they avoid it. Recall that we had our non-cognitivist suggesting that GS 301 could be read as making the grand *metaethical* non-cognitivist point that nature is valueless. This is a descriptive claim and not a normative one and—again simplifying away from some of the complexities of contemporary non-cognitivism—this claim is then not one to which the distinctively non-cognitivist account of normative or evaluative language applies. It is not using normative language and so it is a matter of stating straightforward truths. However, to avoid the charge of subjectivism they will point out that (1) *does* use normative or evaluative language—see the 'valuable/right/good' in the consequent—and so it *is* a normative claim and so the non-cognitivist analysis does apply to it. Thus a sincere utterance of (1) is not the making of some descriptive claim. It is not reporting some truth, let alone any truth entailed by the collection of descriptive truths that constitute the non-cognitivist's metaethical theory. Rather it is the expression of some non-cognitive attitude. Which non-cognitive attitude? Well, the details vary with the form of non-cognitivism, but basically it is a relatively complex, higher-order, non-cognitive motivation to acquire the non-cognitive states expressed by claims of the form '*x* is valuable' when one desires or approves of *x*.

Note that usually the non-cognitive state of desiring *x* and the non-cognitive state expressed by judgements of the form '*x* is valuable' are different. The second non-cognitive state usually has a more complicated functional role. So, for example, it could include a tendency to avowal. It includes a tendency to extinguish a 'conflicting' state, say the state expressed by claims of the form '*x* is not valuable', and so on. See, for example Gibbard (1990) for extended discussions of the differences.

Returning to our conditional (1), the non-cognitivist takes this to be a normative claim and so susceptible to the non-cognitivist account. As we have seen, what such accounts usually say about it is that it expresses a particular kind of higher-order attitude. Crucially it is not a descriptive claim, straightforwardly true or false. Also, crucially, it does not follow just from the descriptive claims that comprise a non-cognitivist theory—including the descriptive claim that

it is a fact that murder is wrong. To put the point crudely, one is either just saying murder is wrong—the minimalist move—or one is saying murder is wrong with emphasis.

nature is, in the intended sense, valueless. Accepting it or not is a matter of normative debate, not a matter of metaethics. Most contemporary non-cognitivists—good, moral agents as they tend to be—will then proceed to take off their metaethical hats, put on their ordinary, moral agent hats, and happily reject (1).⁴

Thus, says our non-cognitivist, GS 301 expresses the general *descriptive* meta-physical world view lying behind non-cognitivism, but there is no reason to read it as making anything like the *normative* claim (1). The kind of subjectivism we want to avoid, she continues, is the one expressed by the normative claim (1). That there is some sense in which a non-cognitivist is committed to the fundamental ontology of the world being valueless is just part of the basic metaphysical commitments of the non-cognitivist, but not, they would insist, a dangerous form of subjectivism.

It is certainly true that there are many who think that the basic metaphysical views of the non-cognitivist do comprise an unacceptable form of subjectivism and that subjectivism has not been avoided just because we have shown that conditionals like (1) do not follow from the non-cognitivist's theory. I have merely repeated the standard non-cognitivist line on this matter. In all likelihood, nothing I have said here will convince anyone who did not already accept that standard line. The point was rather to show what the standard non-cognitivist strategy would be because, as we shall see, Clark and Dudrick do not seem to take this standard route.

As far as I can tell, their implicit reason for telling a far more complicated story—a story whose details we will see below—is that they think the more complicated story gets them more objectivism and less subjectivism than the standard, relatively simple story I just gave. Here are some hints of this. First, after presenting a version of the simple reading I just gave above, they write:

(CDQ1) this would do nothing to show that ethical discourse isn't a subjective affair in which individuals express their own personal preferences ['attitudes, emotions, and sentiments of approval or disapproval']. (204)

The puzzle of course is what to make of the adjective 'personal'. If personal just means a non-cognitive attitude I have as opposed to one that you have, then any standard form of non-cognitivism will indeed involve expressing my own non-cognitive states. Your standard-issue non-cognitivist does not think this is a problem, would be quite surprised by the suggestion that it is, and would be quite interested to hear how something I sincerely say could express attitudes that are not mine. Most importantly, he or she would be interested to hear how any of that would help with objectivity.

Another hint that Clark and Dudrick think the simple story will not give you objectivity—or sufficient objectivity—turns up a page later when they write:

⁴ Rejecting it is not required by non-cognitivism.

(CDQ2) But one factor that makes non-cognitivism implausible to many is its apparent implication that values are dependent on the contingent affective responses of human beings. Is there a way of interpreting Nietzsche's metaethical position without taking it to have this implication? (205)

The puzzle here is what to make of the use of the term 'non-cognitivism' in that first sentence. If we take it as referring to standard-issue contemporary non-cognitivism, then we would expect a rehearsal of the initial standard response to such worries, namely, the discussion above of conditionals of the form (1). However, since Clark and Dudrick do not rehearse that standard response, I take it that the worry being raised here is supposed to be one that is *not* satisfied by that standard move. The suggestion seems then to be that the particular version of non-cognitivism Nietzsche is going to have is somehow going to provide resources for easing worries about dependency on 'contingent affective responses', resources that somehow go beyond the standard non-cognitivist story.

I have presented the simple story first because I want to eventually argue that *if* the simple story is still too subjectivist for one's taste—and as I said I suspect it is too subjectivist for Clark and Dudrick's taste—then the more complex story that follows below does *not* actually get one any additional objectivism.

What is the more complex story? The first complexity that Clark and Dudrick add is an important one. As they point out, it seems implausible to interpret the creators of value mentioned in *GS* 301 as referring to 'humans in general'.

My simple reading on the behalf of non-cognitivism can be modified to accommodate this. The fundamental non-cognitivist ontological point being made remains the same: nature itself is valueless. Some individuals, however, play a distinctive role in getting people to have the distinctive non-cognitive attitude expressed by particular bits of normative language and even, perhaps, playing a distinctive role in generating this linguistic practice. Consider the normative term 'cool'—as in 'that car is cool' or, as my students used to say, 'he's a cool dude'. A non-cognitivist account of such judgements seems quite tempting—tempting I should say even to those who are not otherwise tempted by non-cognitivism. To judge that *x* is cool is just to express a distinctive positive non-cognitive attitude towards *x*. The distinctiveness of the attitude is a function of the unique functional role it plays in the psychological economy of the relevant agents. Now we can imagine crucial historical figures as playing an essential causal role in generating this new non-cognitive attitude in a particular culture and in forging the linguistic connections needed in order for the use of the term 'cool' to express the attitude. This would then be a natural way in which we could then say that these individuals made possible the practice of calling things cool (OED suggests this happened near the end of the nineteenth century, but no doubt there are more detailed histories written). And thus, in a sense allowable by non-cognitivism and not in violation of our crucial conditional (1), they created the value of coolness.

So far there is no difference in objectivity. However, we have hardly scratched the surface of the additional complexity that Clark and Dudrick want to add. I will only be able to give the highlights (I will return to some of these claims later). They are as follows:

- (C1) The value creators of *GS* 301 include the 'ethical teachers' of *GS* 1 (208).
- (C2) The 'ethical teachers' of *GS* 1 established the 'capacity' to 'consider reasons for and against attitudes, beliefs, or actions . . . and to act on these reasons' (210).
- (C3) We can now see how the value creators of *GS* 301 can create values without this meaning that 'that they have . . . made murder wrong or friendship good' (213), i.e. without a problematic form of subjectivism.
- (C4) '[B]y instituting the practice of reason-giving, [they] bring into existence the space of reasons, and . . . it is only this space that makes it possible for anything to be a bearer of normative properties, e.g. to be good or bad, right or wrong' (213). '[T]his makes it possible for there to *be* reasons and therefore values' (213).
- (C5) '[O]nce this space of reasons comes into existence, the normative properties there discerned are determined not by [the value creators of *GS* 301] or by anyone else, but rather by what reasons there are to act and feel in certain ways' (213). Thus the value creators 'create the world of value, even though they do not determine which things in that world bear which normative properties' (213).
- (C6) This is not a form of cognitive realism because Nietzsche is committed to a non-cognitive account of judgements about reasons. A judgement that *P* is a reason to ϕ is just an expression of a particular kind of non-cognitive attitude (214).

There are many puzzles about this story, in particular interpretive ones—that is, puzzles about how the story fits Nietzsche's texts. I will return to some of these interpretive puzzles in the next section. For now I will to continue to argue that these additional complexities should be set aside because they are motivated by a misplaced attempt to provide Nietzsche with a level of objectivity that supposedly contemporary non-cognitivism cannot achieve. For that purpose the following is the crucial point: what we have in effect here is a reduction of talk of values to talk of reasons. And we give a non-cognitivist account of both by giving a non-cognitivist account of reasons. This is a standard-issue strategy: reduce all normative concepts to one normative concept. Apply your metaethical account to that one concept. The metaethical account will then automatically apply to the others through the reductive links you have already established. Peter Railton reduces rightness to goodness and then gives his naturalist realist account for goodness, which automatically spreads, so to speak, to rightness (Railton 1986). Allan Gibbard reduces all normative concepts to the concept of rationality and then gives his non-cognitivist account for judgements of rationality and thus

for all the other normative concepts (Gibbard 1990).⁵ Here, however, is the crucial point: if one did not think my simple interpretation of GS 301 on behalf of the non-cognitivist avoided subjectivism, the interpretation that directly gave a non-cognitivist reading of evaluative claims, then one should not be any more convinced by the version that first reduces the evaluative concepts to the concept of being a reason and then gives a non-cognitivist account of being a reason.

One way of putting this point is as follows. Recall that in (C5) above, Clark and Dudrick wanted to emphasize that according to their account the value creators 'do not determine which things in that world bear which normative properties' (213). If the standard non-cognitivist account of conditionals like (1) were to be accepted, then we would have already taken care of this worry. If it is not, then the worry must not be a worry that the metaethical account implies any particular normative conditional of the form (1), but rather just the general, always-tricky-to-make-stick worry that in the non-cognitivist worldview all we have is a disenchanted nature plus some creatures with non-cognitive attitudes and a penchant to express them to each other. Values, in such a picture, someone might try to say, seem 'dependent on the contingent affective responses of human beings' (205). What is tricky of course is putting that point in a way that does not succumb to the standard non-cognitivist responses to (1). But, again, if that standard response does not satisfy one at this point, then nothing about the additional talk of non-cognitivism about reasons should help.

Here is one more way of putting the point. Take the other quote (CDQ1) in which Clark and Dudrick meant to express disquiet with non-cognitivism: they worried that a simple non-cognitivist reading like mine 'would do nothing to show that ethical discourse isn't a subjective affair in which individuals express their own personal preference' (204). Recall that I worried about what 'personal' meant here. Now consider their more complicated story. From within the normative practice I get to reason as follows:

(2) a is valuable because P is a reason to $\phi(a)$,

where to $\phi(a)$ is, as they put it, 'to take certain actions and attitudes towards' a (213). However, claims of the form ' P is a reason to $\phi(a)$ ' are also expressions of the agent's non-cognitive attitudes. For all that has been said, they are just as 'personal'. They are the attitudes of the agent making the judgement, which may or may not be shared by others.

So far, then, the additional levels of complexity of the story add nothing when it comes to objectivity. The piece that I believe is supposed to officially do the work of ensuring objectivity is the following:

⁵ This is a simplification but the simplification does not undermine the essential point being made here.

(C7) According to Nietzsche, 'one is more objective in holding the values that one does' to 'the extent one' 'appreciate[s] other value perspectives "from the inside"' by bringing 'into focus the features of objects that give rise to affective responses that involve or lead to a different appraisal of them than one's own' (221–2). They emphasize that this requires seeing how others would take these features as *reasons* for their judgements (222).

Finally:

(C8) This is not a form of cognitivism about judgements of objectivity: for S to judge that a person's normative judgement is objective is just to express a non-cognitive state in favour of the (kind of) procedure—non-normatively described—that led to the person's judgement (222–3).

Again, I find the textual evidence for ascribing this picture of objectivity to Nietzsche about values—as opposed, that is, to non-normative, descriptive claims—rather thin, and some of the interpretive moves made rather strained (I will come back to one of those moves in the next section). But I first want to emphasize that the position is just the standard, contemporary non-cognitivist one. Again, if the standard non-cognitivism satisfies one philosophically, then one should not have any new philosophical problems—as opposed to interpretive problems—with the story just told. However, if one were concerned about objectivity in non-cognitivism in general, then one should not think that Nietzsche has provided one with any additional resources.

A brief reminder of worries about non-cognitivism and objectivism might help here. Consider straightforward descriptive truths and let us assume we are also straightforwardly realist about them. When it comes to judgements about such matters, then, we can tell relatively easy stories about *why* different perspectives might help one come to a more objective judgement and, importantly, why objectivity is a good thing: in the simplest case looking at an object from both sides provides more information. When there is no such fact, as the non-cognitivist about the normative domain claims, then it can seem much harder to see what the point is. Consider an example tailored to get one concerned about the view of objectivity for normative judgements ascribed to Nietzsche by Clark and Dudrick.

Imagine, plausibly enough, that there are no truths about which ice cream flavours are better and which are not. As it happens, I prefer chocolate ice cream to strawberry ice cream but you prefer strawberry over chocolate. Non-cognitivism happens to be true for 'betterness' claims about ice cream flavour and so I express my preference by saying that chocolate ice cream is better than strawberry and you yours by saying strawberry is better than chocolate. Now, obnoxious person that I am, I proceed to claim that my judgement is more objective than yours. Why you ask? Well, because I have talked to a lot of people about their responses to chocolate and strawberry ice cream. I know that some of

them respond to the hint of bitterness in the chocolate. Some find strawberry sweeter. Some get turned off by the pink of the strawberry. And so on. Now, if you thought there was a fact about the matter about what the correct reasons for liking chocolate actually were, then you might think that my additional knowledge might increase the likelihood that I have somehow managed to latch on to the correct reason for liking chocolate. But, by hypothesis, there is no such fact that my liking is supposed to track. So when I say my judgement is more objective, I'm just expressing a non-cognitive attitude, a preference, in favour of having whatever likings emerge from or survive the process of seeing what leads other people to like what they do in ice cream.

The temptation is to cook up stories that make it seem as though more is going on here, but the key is to find a story that does not implicitly turn on a form of realism about ice cream betterness facts. And that, I submit, is not easy.

All this is not surprising since a non-cognitivist will be tempted to treat any claim about objectivity for normative claims as a normative claim and so just an expression of a non-cognitive attitude. And any defence of a particular view of objectivity is also going to be a further string of first-order normative claims all of which, of course, will just be further expressions of non-cognitive attitudes.

The fundamental point, then, is that much of the extended elaboration that occurs in Clark and Dudrick's story does not really add anything to the basic standard non-cognitivist story we began with.

4. INTERPRETIVE MATTERS

So far I have not directly addressed the question of whether some form of non-cognitivism should be ascribed to Nietzsche. After all, even if one were not satisfied by the degree or kind of objectivity provided by non-cognitivism, one might still think that it provides a good interpretation of the texts. No doubt we should grant that if non-cognitivism and the kind of objectivity it gives us is implausible enough, then we should hesitate to ascribe it to Nietzsche on grounds of interpretive charity. But surely if the view is sane enough for us to ascribe it to the likes of Allan Gibbard and Simon Blackburn, then whatever philosophical implausibility the view may suffer from is not by itself sufficient to rule out ascribing it to Nietzsche. The question of course is whether the interpretation proposed actually fits the texts. And, crucially, does it fit the texts better than the alternative subjectivist, error-theoretic, or fictionalist readings mentioned already?

I do not think it does, and for two basic reasons: first, I do not think the texts support the supposed radical shift in Nietzsche's metaethical views from error theory to non-cognitivism that, according to Clark and Dudrick, occurs after *Human All-too-Human*. Seeing this in part will require emphasizing the crucial and distinctive differences between non-cognitivism and other metaethical

options. Second, the specific passages that are supposed to have a non-cognitivist flavour to them do not, it seems to me, have such a flavour. They are either, actually, far more friendly to an error-theoretic or fictionalist reading or merely point to the kind of harmless everyday expression of non-cognitive attitudes that I began by reminding you does not support non-cognitivism. After making the case for these two claims, I will turn to the supposed parallels between Nietzsche and Hume and the suggestion that this supports the non-cognitivist reading.

5. FROM ERROR THEORY TO NON-COGNITIVISM?

The evidence for a shift from an error theory about evaluative and normative judgements to a non-cognitivist theory comes in two parts: first, the claim is that in *Human, All-too-Human*, at least part of what leads Nietzsche to accept an error theory is a particular view of what is required for objectivity. It is this view about objectivity that is supposedly given up in later work and this raises the question about whether Nietzsche may have changed his metaethical views (201). Second, there is the supposed direct evidence of, on the one hand, error-theoretic commitments in *HH* and, as I have already mentioned, non-cognitivist commitments in *GS*.

Now, I suspect that to the degree one thinks that there is a radical shift between *HH* and later works one might be more primed to read non-cognitivist commitments into the passages from *GS*—at least, one will be more primed to see some change in Nietzsche's metaethical views. I am going to try to undermine any appeal the textual evidence might have by following a slightly complicated path of presentation, but one that is forced on me for reasons of space. I will first just survey the supposed error-theory supporting passages in *HH*. I will then skip over the *GS* passages that Clark and Dudrick appeal to and instead present passages that are just as error-theory supporting as the *HH* passages but that come from later stages of Nietzsche's writing career. My initial argument will just be that it is very hard to see any dramatic shift of the kind postulated by Clark and Dudrick. What is important is that accepting this claim of mine, I believe, does not require that one agree with me on what metaethical view, if any, should be ascribed to Nietzsche. Though, of course, I will still end up saying some things in favour of my error theory/fictionalism combination. I will then return to the details of the *GS* passages that Clark and Dudrick want to read as expressing a commitment to non-cognitivism.

Here are some standard passages from *HH* that they and others, including myself, have appealed to as evidence for ascribing an error theory:

(NQ2) *Astrology and what is related to it*. It is probable that the objects of the religious, moral and aesthetic sensations belong only to the surface of things, while man likes to believe that here at least he is in touch with the world's heart; the reason he deludes

himself is that these things produce in him such profound happiness and unhappiness, and thus he exhibits here the same pride as in the case of astrology. For astrology believes the starry firmament revolves around the face of man; the moral man, however, supposes that what he has essentially at heart must also constitute the essence and heart of things. (*HH* 4)

Note the title; morality and religion are being equated with astrology as involving claims that are clearly just false. Here is another one:

(NQ3) *Injustice necessary*. All judgements as to the value of life have evolved illogically and are therefore unjust. The falsity of human judgement... is so with absolute necessity... Perhaps it would follow from all this that one ought not to judge at all; if only it were possible to *live* without evaluating, without having aversions and partialities! – for all aversion is dependent on an evaluation, likewise all partiality. A drive to something or away from something divorced from a feeling one is desiring the beneficial or avoiding the harmful, a drive without some kind of knowing evaluation of the worth of its objective, does not exist in man. (*HH* 32)

Note that though this passage begins with what might seem like a more restricted class of judgements—judgements about the value of life—judgements that for reasons I will not go into here really are quite special for Nietzsche—by the end of the passage it is clear that the target is *all value* judgements. They all involve error.

Or consider:

(NQ4) [M]ankind as a whole has *no* goal, and the individual man when he regards its total course... must be reduced to despair. If in all he does he has before him the ultimate goallessness of man, his actions acquire in his own eyes the character of useless squandering. (*HH* 33)

But now take a look at passages from much later in Nietzsche's career. Here is a passage from *Twilight of the Idols* written after *The Gay Science* in 1888:

(NQ5) 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).

This certainly looks like a commitment to cognitivism and error theory or at least as much as anything in *HH* does. Notice that like the passages in *HH*, particularly given the similar comparison to religion, the point is not just that some moral claims are false—a position all of us would agree to. The point is rather that they are systematically false precisely in the way an error theorist would

claim, namely, that the kind of facts that they are supposed to be about do not exist.⁶

Now it may seem as though there is some restriction here to a narrowly conceived domain of specifically *moral* judgements. There are a couple of points to be made in response. To start with, the context of the passage makes clear that a vast range of positions is included: Manu, Confucius, Plato, Judaism, and Christianity. It is an interesting question whether Nietzsche too is included among the improvers of mankind. Thus at least for all these normative and evaluative judgements Nietzsche is still a cognitivist and an error theorist. Therefore the purported change to non-cognitivism must only have occurred for some subset of current evaluative terms.

However, first, no such restriction of domain by Nietzsche is actually defended on interpretive grounds by Clark and Dudrick. Second, there is evidence that no such restriction exists in Nietzsche's mind. Consider the following passages from the *Nachlass* which show no such restriction (note the dates):

(NQ6) All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves... all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination—and they have been falsely *projected* into the essence of things. (*WP* 12; November 1887–March 1888)

Or elsewhere: (NQ7) 'In the entire evolution of morality, truth never appears: all the conceptual elements employed are fictions' (*WP* 428; 1888).

Again, there is no sign in his notes of error theory being applied to most current evaluative and normative judgements, while the non-cognitivism is restricted to some subset. Furthermore, such mixed views are hard to motivate and defend philosophically, and this should be treated as a defeasible reason not to ascribe a mixed view to Nietzsche.

Notice in this context that it is important to bear in mind a potential distinction between one's metaethical account of existing practices of evaluative and normative judgement and one's metaethical account of some practice of judgement that one might be recommending. Thus, according to the kind of interpretation I have defended elsewhere, Nietzsche is committed to something rather similar to what sometimes gets called revolutionary fictionalism (Hussain 2007). That is, according to this interpretation, he posits an error-theoretic account of existing evaluative and normative judgements but suggests a practice in which we continue to make them but in a spirit of pretence. Thus the label fictionalism.

Now the label 'fictionalism' can be misleading here. The label is often taken to suggest a view on which the requisite fictions are quite easy to come by: just pretend, we might say, while explaining the laws of cricket to someone, that the

⁶ I am setting aside the usual controversies about negative facts.

salt shaker is the batsman and the pepper mill the bowler. However, I defend a view according to which the aim of Nietzsche's revaluations is to create honest *illusions* of value. Illusions are different from mere pretences. Merely pretending that the fork in the glass in front of me is bent is different from experiencing the illusion of a bent fork created by filling the glass with water. Such an illusion is honest for the vast majority of us since we know that the fork is not in fact bent.⁷ Creating an honest illusion of value thus involves much more than merely pretending that something is valuable. Or so I have argued.

In any case, I have committed myself to ascribing to Nietzsche two metaethical views: one that applies to the current practice and one that applies to the replacement practice. I mention this because we can imagine a modification of Clark and Dudrick's view in which instead of arguing that Nietzsche is committed to non-cognitivism for all evaluative judgements, they claim instead that he accepts an error theory for the judgements of existing practices but is recommending a replacement practice of which non-cognitivism will be true. This would be an interesting position to consider but it is not obvious what the textual evidence for such a view would be.

Now, finally, let us take a look at the *GS* passages Clark and Dudrick appeal to. We have already seen *GS* 301. I take it that all hands agree that it is not at all obvious which metaethical view that passage supports. But let us take a closer look at *GS* 299, which Clark and Dudrick do think attracts a non-cognitivist reading (202):

(NQ8) *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)

Now, I have to say that this passage does not seem to me to be an expression of non-cognitivism, in the contemporary metaethical sense, at all. That is not to say that it is easy to know what metaethical view might lie behind it. But notice one

⁷ This is why Clark and Dudrick's comment that '[one] reason to consider the fictionalist account of Nietzsche's metaethics implausible is that it is difficult to see how it could cohere with the importance he accords to the will to truth' (206 n.6) is not as powerful an objection as they seem to think: honest fictions are compatible with striving for the truth. See also Hussain (2007: 168–70).

essential, dominant feature of this passage, namely, the crucial role that various kinds of concealment or deception play: making sure there are things we do not see, making sure we give them some kind of non-transparent covering and so on. Why would any of this be central to a non-cognitive practice of valuing? After all the non-cognitivist's point is precisely that there is *no* mistake, deception, or confusion involved in valuing—non-cognitivists see themselves as saving us from having to posit errors or deception as essential to valuing.

Of course, I suspect there is a reason for the emphasis on deception and I think the best way to bring it out is to focus, in opposition to Clark and Dudrick, on the *continuity* between passages such as these and what Nietzsche says in *HH*. In his 1886 preface to *HH*, Nietzsche reiterates the point he had made in the body of *HH* about the 'necessary injustice' involved in evaluative judgements. Nietzsche admits that his looking 'into the world' with his uniquely 'profound degree of suspicion'—the suspicion that makes one think that everything including of course our evaluations are human, all too human—was psychologically difficult:

(NQ9) [I]n an effort to recover from myself, as it were to induce a temporary self-forgetting, I have sought shelter in this or that—in some piece of admiration or enmity or scientificity or frivolity or stupidity; and . . . where I could not find what I *needed*, I had artificially to enforce, falsify and invent a suitable fiction for myself (—and what else have poets ever done? And to what end does art exist in the world at all?) (*HH* P:1)

What I want to emphasize is the connection between poetry and art and the generation of fiction. It is this connection that I want to say Nietzsche is again harping on about in *GS* 299. That is why we are learning from artists. That is why, as in the passage just quoted from *HH*, we need to be poets. And now it should come as no surprise that the passage I quoted already from *HH* 33 continues as follows:

(NQ10; continuation of NQ4) [M]ankind as a whole has *no* goal, and the individual man when he regards its total course . . . must be reduced to despair. If in all he does he has before him the ultimate goallessness of man, his actions acquire in his own eyes the character of useless squandering. But to feel thus *squandered* . . . is a feeling beyond all other feelings.—But who is capable of such a feeling? Certainly only a poet: and poets always know how to console themselves. (*HH* 33)

Poets can console themselves because they do what they have always done, as he says in the preface, namely, create fictions.

Clark and Dudrick take *GS* 299's message to be that we create value by evoking non-cognitive reactions such as preferences and attitudes. Note first that in *GS* 299 there is hardly anything about non-cognitive preferences and attitudes. All the metaphors, except for the first one about taste, are visual cognitive ones and Nietzsche clearly emphasizes that the latter metaphors, the ones involving artists, are the important ones. We could take the first one as

emphasizing that generating a certain kind of non-cognitive reaction is an important part of making something valuable. But note, as I tried to emphasize in my introduction, not any old connection between non-cognitive motivations and value judgements gives you non-cognitivism. What we need evidence for is the very specific semantic thesis that the contemporary non-cognitivist is committed to. And whatever else may be going on here, it is hard to see evidence for that semantic thesis.

Clark and Dudrick bring in *GS7* at this point as support. The opening of this passage reads as follows:

(NQ11) *Something for the industrious.* Anyone who now wishes to make a study of moral matters opens up for himself an immense field for work. All kinds of individual passions have to be thought through and pursued through different ages, peoples, and great and small individuals; all their reason and all their evaluations and perspectives on things have to be brought into the light. So far, all that has given color to existence still lacks a history. (*GS7*)

Clark and Dudrick write that this passage (CDQ3) 'implies that the passions constitute "all that has given color to existence"' (203). Talk of colour is then taken, plausibly enough, as a metaphor for value. Would some such constitution claim support the non-cognitivist reading? Again, it will not cut much ice against, say, the subjectivist unless you can defend the ascription of the specific semantic claim that is at the heart of non-cognitivism. In any case, the passage does not give passions any such specific role. Evaluations, for example, and crucially, seem to also be part of what colours the world.

Furthermore, this passage actually plays against Clark and Dudrick. After emphasizing the vast amount of work that would be required for laying out the history and variation of 'moral matters', Nietzsche writes:

(NQ12) The same applies to the demonstration of the reasons for the differences between moral climates . . . And it would be yet another job to determine the erroneousness of all these reasons and the whole nature of moral judgments to date. (*GS7*)

The continuities with *HH* and the suggestions of systematic error are, I think, obvious.

6. THE COMPARISON TO HUME

At this point in their discussion of the *GS* passages, Clark and Dudrick also appeal to the similarities between Nietzsche's writings and those of David Hume. They clearly take such similarities to be part of their argument for ascribing non-cognitivism to Nietzsche. They sum up their discussion of the passages from *GS* as follows:

(CDQ4) This gives us strong reason to conclude that Nietzsche's metaethical position in *GS* is the basically Humean one that values are projections of passions and feelings. That is, we take ourselves to be talking about what has value . . . precisely when we mix our own reactions with the object, seeing it in terms that are borrowed from our own reactions to it. (203)

Despite Simon Blackburn's recent use of the metaphor of 'projection' for his non-cognitivism it is not at all clear that metaethical views that seem to commit themselves to something worthy of calling 'projection' should naturally be construed as non-cognitivist metaethical views. And the similarity to Hume does not really provide much defence of an ascription of non-cognitivism to Nietzsche since, as I shall briefly remind you, it of course is not obvious what to make of Hume's views.

To see the general point about the metaphor of projection it will help to return to the tinker-toy error theories I sketched in my introduction. Recall then that I pointed out that the error theorist is happy with there also being expressions of non-cognitive attitudes and prescriptions as long as these expressions do not play the semantic role the non-cognitivist claims for them. Now our error theorist pointed to such expressive and prescriptive happenings in order to explain why we make claims like 'killing innocents is wrong' even though such claims are false. The answer was in part to express and prescribe our non-cognitive attitudes towards things. But we might press harder. Why use cognitive language for such non-cognitive work? After all we do have non-cognitive language that can do this work: 'Boo the killing of innocents!' or 'Don't kill innocents!'⁸ Here the error theorist responds with some variation on a single theme: it is useful to 'project' our emotive responses onto the world. If it were completely transparent to us that we were only expressing our own negative attitudes then it would be hard for our statements to have much authority—or at least they would only have whatever authority we already have.

Consider in this context a similar schema for an error theory about witches—the purportedly broomstick-flying kind. For whatever reason, people had various negative attitudes towards certain women in their community—perhaps they were herbal healers challenging the dominant patriarchal order. But if you just say, 'Boo herbal healers!' you don't get very far. However, if you claim that they can do magic, are evil, etc., then there seems to be an objective basis for the negative non-cognitive attitude. Your negative non-cognitive attitude is a warranted response to some feature that the person has. By calling someone a witch you attempt to get others to have your negative attitude but not just by letting them know that you have that attitude—they will not come to share your attitude on that basis unless for some reason they are committed to having

⁸ I am ignoring the complexities generated by the fact that term 'innocents' is hardly a normatively innocent term.

whatever attitudes you happen to have—but rather by claiming that the world is such that it demands that negative attitude. You are just asking your community members to be responsive to the authority of the facts, not simply to your authority. All this of course is not usually posited in general as any kind of attempt at conscious manipulation, but rather a process that happens, so to speak, behind the backs of the participants.

Or at least so the standard error-theoretic story traditionally goes: we have all heard versions of such stories about the belief in witches, God, or gods, and, of course, morality. Whether these are good stories is of course a very good question—I have argued elsewhere that there are systematic dialectical weaknesses that such stories always face (Hussain 2004). What is crucial for our purposes, however, is the notion of ‘projection’ deployed in such stories. Our non-cognitive attitudes are ‘projected’ onto the world, according to these stories, as part of an attempt to ground them in something objective. In this sense of ‘projection’—the sense in which a ‘projector’ projects an image on the screen—the thing projected is not really there.⁹ I emphasize all this because contemporary non-cognitivists, like Simon Blackburn, also talk of ‘projection’. But, as we have just seen, there is a standard usage of the term ‘projection’ that is natural to the error theorist. Indeed this seems to be Nietzsche’s own usage:

(NQ6) All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves... all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination—and they have been falsely *projected* [*projicere*] into the essence of things. (WP 12)

Thus showing that a view involves the projection of passions and feelings does not yet yield non-cognitivism.

Neither does a purported similarity with Hume. Clark and Dudrick give the famous quote on gilding and staining (204). Here, however, are some other famous ones:

(HQ1)... the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any internal impressions, which they occasion, and which always make their appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses. Thus as certain sounds and smells are always found to attend certain visible objects, we naturally imagine a conjunction, even in place, betwixt the objects and qualities, tho’ the qualities be of such a nature as to admit of no such conjunction, and really exist no where.¹⁰

⁹ I should emphasize that I am not at all claiming that this is the only or dominant sense of ‘projection’ in English—that would be a crazy claim—but it is an old one: 1687 at least says the OED. Cf. Kail 2007: xxvi–xxvii, 3.

¹⁰ Hume 1978: 167.

Notice of course the apparent claim of error. He puts this even more clearly later:

(HQ2) Thus supposing we consider a fig at one end of the table, and an olive at the other, ’tis evident, that in forming the complex ideas of these substances, one of the most obvious is that of their different relishes; and ’tis as evident, that we incorporate and conjoin these qualities with such as are colour’d and tangible. The bitter taste of the one, and sweet of the other are suppos’d to lie in the very visible body, and to be separated from each other by the whole length of the table. This is so notable and so natural an illusion, that it may be proper to consider the principles from which it is derived.¹¹

Notice, again, the suggestion of error. Hume then proceeds as promised to explain our propensity to this illusion (and, recall, to argue why in fact the belief that the taste must be in the visible body must be false on pain of absurdity).

None of this is to deny that interpreting Hume as committed to error theory brings its own very serious interpretive puzzles. These puzzles with reading Hume’s projection-like metaphors in terms of an error theory, and the resulting pressure to read him as a non-cognitivist in something like the contemporary sense, are well brought out in Peter Kail’s recent book *Projection and Realism in Hume’s Philosophy*. Kail, however, also emphasizes the interpretive puzzles raised by reading him as a non-cognitivist.¹² The point is that it is not at all obvious that analogies to Hume show that Nietzsche is a non-cognitivist since it is quite controversial what to make of Hume’s own views.

7. CONCLUSION

I have focused on criticizing one particular attempt to defend a non-cognitivist interpretation of Nietzsche’s metaethics—non-cognitivist in the contemporary sense dominant in ‘analytic’ metaethics—namely that of Clark and Dudrick. Once we have managed to get clear on what would be required in order for Nietzsche to be a non-cognitivist in this contemporary sense, the texts do not support such an interpretation over various competitors. Or so I have tried to argue. I do believe the general lesson can be drawn from this particular instance that defending a non-cognitivist interpretation of Nietzsche’s metaethics will be very difficult. Contemporary non-cognitivism essentially involves certain particular strategies of explaining the semantics of moral language and thought, and textual support for ascribing such strategies to Nietzsche simply does not exist.¹³

¹¹ Hume 1978: 236.

¹² For a brief summary of the pressures towards, and challenges facing, both error-theoretic and non-cognitivist readings of Hume, see the introduction of (Kail 2007). Of course, there is a vast Hume literature that is relevant to all this.

¹³ A version of this paper was originally presented at a conference on *Nietzsche, Naturalism and Normativity* at the University of Southampton in the summer of 2008. I am most grateful for helpful comments from the audience.

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6

Nietzsche and Moral Fictionalism

Alan Thomas

This paper has three aims.¹ First, it will assess Nadeem Hussain's well-known moral fictionalist interpretation of Nietzsche (Hussain 2007). Secondly, it will do so in part by evaluating moral fictionalism as a free-standing metaethical view. Its third aim is to distinguish different forms of 'subjective realism' and to contrast one version of that view from another that Hussain discusses and rejects in the course of his argument. This will prove important, as Hussain establishes his conclusion by eliminating alternative interpretations of Nietzsche's metaethics. I will suggest that there is one alternative that he dismissed too hastily. I will further suggest, in contrast to Hussain, that Nietzsche's influence on contemporary metaethics is not that of a pioneer of a novel metaethical approach to our ethical commitments such as fictionalism. Instead, Nietzsche directs our focus to the 'subject' aspect of a defensible form of subjective realism in a way that connects with his primarily normative interests. I will argue that he is interested in the subjective conditions for valuation on the part of the judger, not necessarily a scepticism about value, with the ultimate aim of diagnosing a nihilism that fails to take any existing values as worthwhile ends.

The argument of this paper is intended to be cumulative. Section 1 establishes that interpreting Nietzsche as a global 'error theorist' about all values would fail to capture one important dimension of what he means by 'revaluation' and seems, in fact, to fail to do justice to his actual practice of vindicating some of our existing values as potentially life-enhancing. (It is dialectically important that Hussain recognizes this fact about how we are best to understand the 'revaluation' of values.) Section 2 establishes that, given the independent implausibility of fictionalism as a free-standing view, we have good reason not to find that view in Nietzsche, particularly not when construed as a form of a global replacement for those values entirely discredited by an error theory. Section 3 distinguishes

¹ This paper originated as a contribution to the conference 'Nietzsche and Approaches to Ethics' at the University of Southampton. The basis on which this paper was invited was that it was intended to be contribution to Nietzsche studies from the perspective of contemporary metaethics. Its aims, then, are not directly to contribute to Nietzsche scholarship but to appraise contemporary interpretations of Nietzsche's metaethics from the perspective of current work in metaethics.