Nietzsche on Honesty

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ABSTRACT

Some commentators have argued that curiosity, not honesty, is Nietzsche’s central intellectual virtue. These commentators give minimalistic interpretations of the nature of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty, casting it as a disposition to ensure that relevant epistemic standards are applied during belief formation. I argue against such interpretations by highlighting three strands of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty which they fail to accommodate (cf. GS 2, GS 335, BGE 230). I interpret Nietzsche’s concept of honesty against the background of his drive psychology and show that it applies not only to reflective cognitive processes but also to unconscious cognitive processes. In concluding, I explain the key role which honesty plays in Nietzsche’s project of translating ‘man back into nature’ (BGE 230).

INTRODUCTION

Alfano (2013) and Reginster (2013) argue that curiosity is Nietzsche’s key intellectual virtue. In so doing, these commentators push honesty into a secondary role and offer a minimalistic interpretation of this virtue. Honesty is thus understood merely as a tendency to apply epistemic standards conscientiously when forming beliefs. In this paper I argue that such minimalistic interpretations fail to capture the depth of the concept as Nietzsche uses it. In section one, I outline the interpretations of Alfano and Reginster. I also introduce three strands of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty that they fail to accommodate. In section two, I introduce the relevant aspects of Nietzsche’s drive psychology as the context within which his remarks on honesty must be understood. I then, in section three, discuss Nietzsche’s employment of the virtue of honesty in his attack on the ascetic scientist of the third essay in On the Genealogy of Morals. This enables me to distinguish my account of Nietzsche’s honesty from those of Alfano and Reginster. Section four then summarizes my interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty and the shortcomings of the minimalistic interpretations of Alfano and Reginster. In concluding, I demonstrate how and why honesty is central to Nietzsche’s philosophical project “[t]o translate humanity back into nature”; as he himself states that it is in BGE 230. This paper thus offers a new interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty. This concept will be of interest within Nietzsche scholarship but also to a wider audience.

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SECTION ONE: HONESTY, INTELLECTUAL CONSCIENCE, AND CURIOSITY

Whilst some influential commentators (most notably Clark [1990]) have taken Nietzsche to have a substantial theoretical interest in issues relating to the nature of truth, there has been a recent trend to refrain from reading any theory of truth into Nietzsche’s often polemical remarks on truth. This trend was foreshadowed by Gemes (1992) and finds recent expression in Jenkins (2012, 271). However, Nietzsche certainly is interested in the components that make up an epistemically virtuous agent. Mark Alfano has recently argued that Nietzsche’s focus in this area—“on the process of investigation, the value of justification, knowledge and intellectual virtue, and the contribution of virtue to flourishing” (Alfano 2013, 772)—means that he shares an affinity with inquiry-responsibilist virtue epistemologists. Alfano goes on to argue that curiosity is Nietzsche’s sole “cardinal” intellectual virtue.

Both Alfano and Reginster view curiosity as “the specification of the will to power in the domain of epistemology” (Alfano 2013, 767). Both follow Reginster’s earlier work in their general account of will to power (2007, 37). This leads them to conceive of curiosity as “the second-order desire for the solving of problems and puzzles in pursuit of a determinate first-order desire to believe the correct answers to hard questions” (Alfano 2013, 780). This way of framing curiosity enables Reginster and Alfano to distinguish those genuinely curious seekers after knowledge from those who desire only the possession of knowledge—and who do so because they have a “demand for certainty . . . the demand that one wants by all means something be firm” (GS 347).

Therein lies the ambivalence of curiosity: the seeker after knowledge must want both knowledge and uncertainty or ignorance. He cannot be a genuine seeker after truth unless he actually wants to find it, but since what he cares about is the search after truth, he must also welcome the uncertainty and ignorance that supply opportunities for it. (Reginster 2013, 457)

One reason why Reginster and Alfano push the virtue of honesty into a secondary role is because on their accounts it fails to capture the disposition to actively seek truth and to seek difficult problems to solve. This disposition is what Nietzsche, and Reginster following him, refers to as “the spirit of inquiry after truth” and associates with the “free spirits” which are his model epistemic agents (HH I.225; Reginster 2013, 443). Reginster treats honesty as a theoretical norm on belief formation, which he distinguishes from a related practical norm constitutive of a distinct kind of truthfulness. These norms can be stated as such:

Theoretical Norm (Honesty): “Every belief is a holding-something-to-be-true” (WP 15). Intellectual honesty requires that one aims at truth in one’s belief formation; one’s beliefs are thus answerable to the relevant epistemic norms.

Practical Norm (Truthfulness): Truthfulness requires “framing one’s representational relation with the world exclusively with propositional attitudes that aim at the truth” (Reginster 2013, 449).
The theoretical norm covers only belief formation, whereas the practical norm covers a wider range of what Reginster refers to as “representational propositional attitudes” (Reginster 2013, 446). Reginster describes this wider range of representational propositional attitudes as “attitude[s] of acquiescence, in a broad sense, to a representation of the world being a certain way” (ibid.). Such attitudes include: “make-believe” and “pragmatic reliance on certain concepts in representing the world” (ibid.). The possession of both of these norms is, according to Reginster, compatible with a failure to possess the “spirit of inquiry after truth.” Honesty could “be achieved simply by holding as few beliefs as possible” (Reginster 2013, 450). Further, the practical norm of “[f]raming my representational relationship with the world with attitudes that aim at truth” is, according to Reginster, “compatible with the suspension of belief, or even with ignorance, so long as it is properly acknowledged” (Reginster 2013, 450). Alfano similarly argues that honesty, which on his interpretation seems to incorporate both the theoretical and practical norm set out above, is compatible with suspension of belief on difficult issues (Alfano 2013, 784–85). The conception of honesty that these commentators argue is present in Nietzsche’s work is thus one where the possession of honesty is compatible with mere epistemic passivity: as Alfano puts it “such a state could be static” (Alfano 2013, 778).²

One further important aspect of Reginster’s interpretation is his account of Nietzsche’s man of conviction as the opposite of the curious agent who has the “spirit of inquiry after truth.” When discussing GM III 24, Reginster explains Nietzsche’s dissatisfaction with the ascetic scientist as being due to the ascetic scientist clinging to the unconditional valuation of truth as a conviction. Reginster notes several traits of the man of conviction. Firstly, he is a man of convention: “The fettered spirit takes up his position, not for reasons, but out of habit; he is a Christian, for example, as a man born in wine-producing country becomes a wine-drinker” (HH II. 637). The content of the convictions of such a spirit is thus likely to be the result of a simple inheritance of the beliefs prevalent in one’s culture and one’s peers. Secondly, the fanaticism with which these beliefs are defended betrays the fact that a psychological need to be in possession of truth (or at least to believe oneself to be) is operative: “one wanted to be in the right because one thought one needed to be... [T]he will was only too audibly the prompter of the intellect” (HH I. 630; cf. GS 347). Thirdly, “on account of the ardor of this demand one is easier and more negligent about the demonstration of certainty” (GS 347). Crucially, the slackening of epistemic standards here is not (or at least not always) consciously recognized by the agent. The psychological certainty of the truth of the belief that is won by this slackening of epistemic standards “is not experienced as merely psychological, however, but as epistemically grounded” (Reginster 2013, 445). One further way in which the man of conviction fails to act in accordance with epistemic standards is his inability to allow that the belief believed as a conviction is subject to challenge: “[f]or instance he might reject as illegitimate any challenge to his convictions—it looks to him unthinkable and should not even be ‘permitted’” (Reginster 2013, 445; cf. GM III 24).

Reginster parses GM III 24 and Nietzsche’s attack on the scholars and philosophers who labor under the ascetic ideal in terms of this final tendency of the man of
conviction: their inability to allow the object of their conviction to be challenged (Reginster 2013, 445). I shall refer to the target of Nietzsche’s attack in GM III 24 as the “ascetic scientist.” These “last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience dwells today” have unflinchingly applied the relevant epistemic standards to Christian dogma and uncovered its falsity. However, Nietzsche asserts that they nonetheless fail to be genuinely free spirits—to be genuinely curious—because they hold a conviction that truth is of unconditional value. Ascetic scientists believe themselves to be “the sought after opponents of the ascetic ideal, its counter-idealists” yet

to divulge to them what they themselves cannot see—for they stand too close to themselves—this ideal is precisely their ideal as well [. . .]. These are by no means free spirits: for they still believe in truth . . . (GM III 24)

The belief held as a conviction is the belief in the unconditional value of truth: “it is the belief in a metaphysical value, a value in itself of truth” (GM III 24). Nietzsche believes this conviction to have been inherited from the Christian faith. It is a belief which hitherto “was simply not permitted to be a problem” (GM III 24). The rhetorical structure of the passage makes clear what must happen if genuine free spirits are to emerge: the belief in the unconditional value of truth must be recognized as having been, hitherto, a conviction, and must “be experimentally called into question . . .” (GM III 24). Coming to recognize one’s convictions and unfettering oneself from them thus operates for Nietzsche on Reginster’s interpretation as something like a necessary condition on being a free spirit and possessing the virtue of curiosity.

I agree with Alfano and Reginster that honesty must involve a general regard for epistemic standards. I also agree that Nietzsche’s remarks on the intellectual virtues must be understood against the background of his understanding of cognition and inquiry as more than “mere information-processing.” As Alfano puts it, Nietzsche’s interest in these processes are “deeply connected with the desires, motives and values of the cognizer and investigator” (Alfano 2013, 787). Indeed, I will argue that it is precisely when Nietzsche’s drive psychology is considered in connection with his concept of honesty that the minimalistic accounts of Alfano and Reginster can be seen to be insufficient. Nietzsche asserts that representational propositional attitudes are produced and structured by drives working beneath the threshold of consciousness. I will argue that he considers states so produced to be assessable in terms of honesty. This is a distinctive aspect of my account: I take honesty to apply not merely to reflective cognitive processes but to an agent’s cognitive orientation as a whole. Nietzsche is clear that this cognitive orientation is predominantly shaped unconsciously, thus unconscious cognitive processes are, on my account, assessable in terms of honesty. If I’m successful in demonstrating this, then I will show that—contra Reginster and Alfano—the remit of honesty is not restricted to the application of epistemic standards during the reflective process of belief formation.

The passages in the later philosophy where Nietzsche offers his longest discussions of honesty already suggest three strands to this concept which Alfano and
Reginster fail to accommodate. On my interpretation, Nietzsche’s honesty encompasses all of these three strands. It is best thought of as a disposition to employ these three strands in one’s cognitive endeavors in order to overcome the epistemically pernicious consequences which otherwise obtain. In setting these strands out, I follow Alfano and Reginster in taking Nietzsche to use the terms ‘honesty’ and ‘intellectual conscience’ interchangeably. Nietzsche consistently employs the terms in this manner. Indeed, he often uses the terms not only interchangeably but in close proximity (BGE 227–30; GS 335).

The second section of *The Gay Science*, entitled “Intellectual Conscience,” treats an agent’s evaluative orientation as assessable in terms of intellectual conscience. Here Nietzsche laments the fact that the “great majority lacks an intellectual conscience” and asserts that even when given good reasons to do so, people are not generally disposed to revise their evaluative orientation.

> Everyone looks at you with strange eyes and goes on handling their scales, calling this good and that evil; nobody as much as blushes when you notice that their weights are underweight. (GS 2)

What this suggests is that we should understand honesty not only as Reginster’s theoretical norm on belief formation, but as a practical norm which views the broader category of the agent’s representational propositional attitudes as assessable in terms of honesty. Further, this broader category should be understood to encompass an agent’s evaluative orientation in their environment. I will refer to this strand of honesty as the ‘evaluative strand’.4

Another strand of honesty is highlighted in BGE 230. In this passage, Nietzsche casts honesty in the role of working against a tendency which he associates with the “fundamental will of the spirit.” This “fundamental will” “wants to dominate itself and its surroundings”:

> it wills simplicity out of multiplicity [...] to appropriate foreign elements [...] to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold. [...] Its intention here is to incorporate new “experiences,” to classify new things into old classes. (BGE 230)

This tendency is often referred to in Nietzsche texts. Nietzsche discusses a local manifestation of this “fundamental will of the spirit” in the domain of cognition. It is similarly associated with the tendency of drives to expand by drawing elements of the external world into their schemata of conceptualization and explanation (see, e.g., GS 355, TI Errors 5; cf. GS 2, GS 111, GS 347, GS 354, A 54, BGE 268).5 The most direct expression of this idea is when Nietzsche links “The origin of our concept of ‘knowledge’” to an “instinct of fear” which, on his view, pushes us to render novel and unfamiliar aspects of our environment as familiar and already known. This process is motivated by the desire to possess a “regained sense of security” (GS 355). That which seems “dangerous, anxiety-provoking, upsetting” is represented through familiar concepts and explanations which make it appear as known and nonthreatening: “the first idea that can familiarize the unfamiliar feels good enough” (TI, Errors 5).6
This tendency is epistemically impoverishing in several ways. One being that new experiences are not considered in their own right but are routinely represented as simply containing new instances of old, and already known, phenomena. Honesty is cast in the role of counteracting this tendency:

[The “fundamental will of the spirit”] meets resistance from that sublime tendency of the knower, who treats and wants to treat things in a profound, multiple, thorough manner. This is a type of cruelty on the part of the intellectual conscience [. . .]. (BGE 230)

Intellectual conscience thus provides something like a check on powerful drives in this regard. Let us call this strand of honesty the ‘policing strand’. Nietzsche also discusses this strand of honesty in GS 319 when he links “a type of honesty” with the disposition intellectually conscientious people possess to make “experiences a matter of conscience for their knowledge.” That is, a disposition not to falsify experiences by overzealously applying a pre-existing schema of concepts to them.

Finally, in GS 335, Nietzsche refers to the intellectual conscience as the “conscience behind your ‘conscience’.” Nietzsche describes how an individual may hear their conscience telling them that “this or that judgment” is correct or may sense that it is their conscience which leads them to “feel something to be right.” Intellectual conscientiousness requires that individuals interrogate the sources of their conscience and the orientation which it provides them with in a given situation. It may be the case, for example, that the content of your conscience has “its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labeled right since your childhood” (GS 335).

Your judgement, “that is right” has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, “how did it emerge?” and then also, “what is really impelling me to listen to it?” (GS 335)

I will refer to this strand of honesty as the ‘self-scrutiny strand’. It highlights the necessity of understanding the drives and motivations within oneself which might be influencing one’s cognitive and evaluative orientation in a given situation or with regard to a given subject matter. In her study of the development of Nietzsche’s understanding of honesty, Melissa Lane shows that the notion of honesty which the mature Nietzsche most unreservedly champions (the notion he typically uses Redlichkeit to refer to) is distinguished because of its tight connection with ridding oneself of self-deception or, indeed, deception of any kind (Lane, 33). My reference to the self-scrutiny strand of honesty—and, to a lesser extent, the policing strand—captures this aspect of Nietzsche’s account.

These passages certainly seem to suggest that the remit of honesty stretches beyond processes of belief formation governed by reflective deliberation, contra Alfano and Reginster. Further a key theme uniting the strands of honesty highlighted here is that they all in some way seek to counteract epistemically pernicious activities of the drives. In order to bring this out, I now turn to an exposition of Nietzsche’s drive
SECTION TWO: NIETZSCHE’S DRIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Whilst the nature of Nietzschean drives is a thorny topic, I aim to skirt the controversial issues here. I draw on the work of Paul Katsafanas who describes Nietzschean drives as “dispositions that induce affective orientations in the agent. [. . .] these affective orientations can be understood as evaluative orientations” (Katsafanas 2013, 733). What is important for our purposes is how drives can influence an agent’s evaluative orientation, and how this influence is manifested in an agent’s perception and conceptualization of their environment. This influence pushes agents to adopt representational propositional attitudes without these attitudes being scrutinized by consciousness. Examining Nietzsche’s drive psychology will also make salient how the influence of drives over cognition can lead the agent into self-ignorance: “nothing [. . .] can be more incomplete than [an agent’s] image of the totality of drives which constitute his being” (D 119).

The motivational force of the drives on Katsafanas’s interpretation is not exhausted by the fact that drives working beneath the threshold of consciousness generally have a greater influence on the agent’s actions than conscious deliberation. In addition to this, Katsafanas explains that a particular kind of self-ignorance is propagated by drives working beneath the level of consciousness regarding the motivations behind actions. Katsafanas describes this self-ignorance in the following way: even “an agent who does self-consciously attend to her A-ing can in some sense remain ignorant of her A-ing” (Katsafanas, 734). The ignorance in question here relates to the agent’s knowledge of their ultimate motivation for A-ing: “If an organism instinctively A-s in order to G, then the organism may know that it is A-ing, but does not know that it is A-ing in order to G. (ibid., 738).

Indeed, along with the minimal knowledge that one is “A-ing,” Katsafanas argues that even reflection on one’s reasons for A-ing will still often leave one’s ultimate motivations opaque to conscious thought. This is because Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer in conceiving of drives as manipulating agents to act and manipulating the pre- and post hoc conscious reflection of agents regarding their action.

Schopenhauer holds that drives typically move a person not by blindly impelling him to act, but by structuring his affects, thoughts, and perceptual orientation toward the world. (Katsafanas 2013, 739)

[When Schopenhauer offers extended discussions of the operation of drives, he typically treats them as operating through, rather than independently of, the agent’s reflective thoughts. (Katsafanas 2013, 739 n.19)

The picture being painted here is one where even what might seem like rigorous reflective thought on one’s reasons for actions is compatible with ignorance of the forces which are in fact causally responsible for them.
Katsafanas illustrates this thought through a scenario drawn from Iris Murdoch’s *The Sovereignty of the Good* (1985, 17–18). This scenario helps bring out the ways in which drives are responsible for producing perceptual saliences, effecting how we conceptualize aspects of our environment and affecting our evaluative orientation. It also illustrates how drives move us to act via these means without openly disclosing the ultimate motivations underlying our actions.

Murdoch’s scenario involves a jealous Mother (M) who feels hostility toward her daughter-in-law (D) and falls into believing “the cliché: my poor son has married a silly vulgar girl” (ibid.). This verdict is precipitated by the way M, who is in the thrall of jealousy, perceives D’s initial actions and gestures toward her. D is perceived by M to be “inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile” (ibid.). One thought here is simply that attention is directed toward certain aspects of D’s conduct. Certain gestures like, for example, a brusque movement of the hand, are made salient. This doesn’t exhaust the point Katsafanas is trying to make, however. His point is not only that a certain gesture is made salient and is, as it were, neutrally put forward for assessment, but also that it is immediately represented as *brusque*. “In this way,” Katsafanas asserts, “drives and affects influence the content of experience itself” and do not merely cause perceptual saliences (*Katsafanas 2013, 743*).

Further, this kind of influence of the drives and affects (in this case M’s jealousy) pushes a certain more general way of conceptualizing the situation. “M’s jealousy not only causes D’s hand gestures to be made salient [and] in addition [...] leads M to perceive these gestures as juvenile,” it is also the case that partialities of these sorts have the tendency to scale up to a negative conceptualization of the type of person D is. D’s hand gestures and character could have been experienced as “delightfully youthful” instead, but “the attitude [of jealousy] leads the agent to conceptualize the situation in a certain way” (*Katsafanas 2013, 743*).

Scaling up further, Katsafanas views these ways of experiencing and conceptualizing situations as moving one toward the adoption (or the re-entrenchment) of evaluations, desires, and plans for action relative to the situation. For example, even if M consciously reflects on how to conduct herself with regard to D, her reflection is likely to include evaluations of her as brusque and juvenile; it will thus not escape the influence of her jealousy.

Drives manifest themselves by coloring our view of the world, by generating perceptual saliences, by influencing our emotions and other attitudes, by fostering desires. Thus, Nietzsche’s idea is that the way in which one experiences the world is, in general, determined by one’s drives in a way that one typically does not grasp. (*Katsafanas 2013, 743*)

Katsafanas’s account of Nietzsche’s drive psychology gives us another way of understanding the kind of influence that the “fundamental will of the spirit” has on our orientation in the world (BGE 230). Such a will “arbitrarily select[s] certain aspects” of the external world “for stronger emphasis, stress, or falsification in its own interest.” Not only do drives thus seek to expand their control over their environment, they
also affect an agent’s evaluative orientation and bring it in line with their goals. They thus cause epistemic enclosure in a similar way to M’s jealousy. The role of honesty is understood as a kind of resistance to this process: honesty is “that sublime tendency of the knower, who treats [...] things in a profound, multiple, thorough manner” (BGE 230; cf. GS 347 and A 54).

In counteracting the “fundamental will of the spirit” in this regard, the intellectual conscience—in its policing strand—should not be thought of as some disembodied tendency which mitigates the epistemically deleterious effects of drives on cognition from without, but instead as a drive itself. Nietzsche’s reason for describing the intellectual conscience as a kind of “cruelty” (one trained through “hardening and sharpening”) seems at least partly to be due to the role it plays in impinging, or at least policing, the expansion of other drives. It is in this way that Nietzsche conceives of the drive related to honesty as ‘policing’ the drives and mitigating their tendency toward partiality and epistemic enclosure. The intellectual conscience should thus be thought of as part of the general economy of the drives. Drives aren’t discrete entities forming interpretations of their environment in isolation from the rest of the organism. Instead drives vie with each other as parts of the organism, and attempt to exert their influence by pushing perceptual and evaluative saliences consonant with their ends. Intellectual conscientiousness operates within this economy; it is not an escape from cognitive and evaluative orientation, but a more conscientious mode of it.11

With Nietzsche’s drive psychology now sketched we can also make better sense of the passage entitled “Intellectual Conscience” (GS 2)—and of the evaluative strand of honesty. Agents are routinely influenced by dominant drives in how they perceive, conceptualize, and evaluate their environment, and this influence often takes hold below the level of consciousness. As this influence has a significant impact on how an agent understands their environment and acts within it, Nietzsche includes an agent’s evaluative orientation amongst the representational propositional attitudes which are assessable in terms of honesty. Drives influence one’s evaluative orientation in ways not immediately accessible to conscious reflection, for example, by morally infusing percepts: “The extent of moral evaluations: they play a part in almost every sense impression. Our world is colored by them” (WP 260, cf. WP 506). Intellectual conscientiousness, contra Reginster, requires action to develop awareness of these influences and a disposition, and capacity, to address them. The means to doing this are related to the self-scrutiny strand of honesty, as described in section one.

Straightforward reflection on one’s actions alone won’t always be efficacious in this regard. As noted above, drives exert their influence through reflective thought and through the saliences and conceptualizations of a scenario initially given to consciousness. Thus, in the case of M’s jealousy, Katsafanas points out that

M is acting reflectively, and her choice does result in action. Yet M is in the thrall of attitudes that operate in the background. I suggest that this is what Nietzsche has in mind when he claims that reflection does not enable one to escape the influence of the drives. (Katsafanas 2013, 751)
In concluding her scenario, Murdoch does allow that the jealous mother-in-law M moves to an epistemically superior position. Her description of this process provides us with a way of bringing out one main point being made in GS 335. Firstly, M identifies an attitude which might be affecting her perception of D:

M tells herself: “I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.”

Upon considering things again, a different orientation emerges:

D is discovered not to be vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful, and so on. (Murdoch 1985, 17–18)

M cannot counteract her jealousy simply by reflective thought, or by scrutinizing the brute and neutral facts of the case; such brute and neutral facts are unavailable. The access she currently has to D’s personality is instinctively evaluatively lined up with her current verdict of D. What M instead does is analyze whether any fundamental motivation might have imprinted itself onto her experience of D’s personality. It is when she does this that she is then able to “look again” and move beyond the epistemically enclosing effect of her jealousy. The parallel with GS 335 here comes easily. Nietzsche’s discussion in that passage associates conscience with a certain default orientation that one has in a given situation: “that you hear this or that judgment [. . .] that you feel something to be right” (GS 335). Intellectual conscience is a process associated with developing awareness that one’s orientation bears the imprint of some deeper motivation: “your judgment ‘that is right’ has a prehistory in your drives” (GS 335). The intellectual conscience is cast as “[a] conscience behind your conscience” which interrogates one’s orientation: “‘how did it emerge there?’ [. . .] ‘what is really impelling me to listen to it?’” (GS 335). M’s ability to overcome her jealousy results from a similar process of identifying that jealousy has been effective in forming her perceptual and evaluative orientation.

SECTION THREE: HONESTY AND THE ASCETIC IDEAL

My account can be distinguished from that of Reginster by looking again at Nietzsche’s discussion of the ascetic scientist in GM III 24. Our discussion in the previous section focused on the way that drives within an organism vie with each other and work to construct an agent’s orientation in their environment. Nietzsche also discusses how drives operate in a similar way interpersonally. The ascetic scientist, for example, conceives of himself as the opponent of the ascetic ideal, yet Nietzsche argues that he is in fact under the sway of the drive to negate life that is foundational to it. This drive to negate life is associated with the ascetic priest and the influence this figure wields (GM III 11). I shall here bring out how the ascetic scientist’s evaluative orientation, particularly with regard to the pursuit of truth, is influenced interpersonally by his inheritance of the ascetic priest’s conception of knowledge.
As noted in section one, Reginster insightfully recognizes that Nietzsche’s dissatisfaction with the ascetic scientist’s unconditional valuation of truth is due to this valuation having the status of a conviction. In spite of the ascetic scientist having pursued truth and through this pursuit eradicated their belief in Christian dogma, they have failed to expunge Christian morality: “the ever more strictly understood concept of truthfulness” (GM III 27). Thus they still draw their motivation from the same source as the ascetic ideal (GM III 24, GS 344). To recap, Reginster explains the gap between the ascetic scientist and Nietzsche’s free spirit in terms of the free spirit abandoning the commitment to the unconditional valuation of truth and possessing curiosity in the form of a specification of the will to power in the domain of knowledge.

Reginster interprets Nietzsche’s conception of honesty as the theoretical norm requiring beliefs to be formed in line with the relevant epistemic standards. This means that he does not assign honesty a role in explaining how the ascetic scientist might eradicate their conviction regarding the value of truth. Nor does he explain the free spirit’s greater intellectual virtuosity in terms of honesty. I believe this to be a mistake which highlights the insufficiency of the minimalistic notion of honesty that Reginster and Alfano argue for. The interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept of honesty which I have been developing allows us to provide a richer explanation of Nietzsche’s criticism of the ascetic scientist; one in which the virtue of honesty is central.

Reginster’s interpretation explains one way that the ascetic scientist is related to the ascetic ideal. The ascetic scientist pursues truth unconditionally, just as Christian morality teaches. I suggest that there is an important further sense in which the ascetic scientist is distinctly ascetic. The ascetic scientist’s conception of what the pursuit of truth entails is one which calls for precisely the extirpation of the forces Nietzsche deems to be the essence of life (GM II 12). In pursuing truth and valuing it unconditionally the ascetic scientist thus not only holds a conviction, but also seeks the destruction of that within himself which is, according to Nietzsche, distinctive of life. That the ascetic scientist is drawn toward this end of negating life is unsurprising when we note that the conception of knowledge the ascetic scientist employs is precisely that which Nietzsche associates with the ascetic priest’s “incarnate will to contradiction and anti-nature” in GM III 12.12

The priest’s conception of knowledge, or, more specifically, of the ideal state of the knower, is defined by Nietzsche in opposition to his own conception of knowledge. Nietzsche’s conception requires that the knower engage their affects in the process of inquiry and develop multiple “affective interpretations” (GM III 12). Thus, Nietzsche views the priest’s conception of the ideal state of the knower as straightforwardly wrong: “to disconnect the affects one and all […] would that not be to castrate the intellect?” (GM III 12). More interestingly though, the ascetic scientist’s inheritance of this conception can be seen as the ascetic priest’s drive to negate life continuing to influence the orientation of the ascetic scientist and inclining him to seek its end of extirpating the affects. In GM III 24 we are told that the ascetic scientist aims at the “renunciation of all interpretation” in the pursuit of truth. This aim “expresses asceticism of virtue as forcefully as does any negation of sensuality” (GM
That this pursuit is ascetic follows from the similar description that Nietzsche gives of the essence of all interpreting and the essence of life. The former is described as: “doing violence, pressing into orderly form, abridging, omitting, padding, fabricating, falsifying” (GM III 24). The latter as: “the essential pre-eminence of the spontaneous, attacking, infringing, reinterpreting, reordering, and formative forces” (GM II 12).

This links with our discussion so far in two main ways. Firstly, the above description provides an example of one way in which drives exert influence on an agent’s orientation in the case of interpersonal drive relations. The thought here is that in inheriting the ascetic priest’s conception of knowledge, the ascetic scientist continues to have his agency dominated by the ascetic ideal. This is in spite of his conscious belief that he is the opponent and destroyer of the ascetic ideal. Not only is the truth pursued unconditionally, i.e., in such a way that other aspects of life are sacrificed for it. It also the case that the priestly conception of knowledge implicates the ascetic scientist in an ascetic evaluative orientation with regard to the employment of his affects in the pursuit of truth.

Secondly, the failure of the ascetic scientist to recognize the influence of ascetic motivations on his orientation is a failure of the self-scrutiny strand of honesty as it is set out in GS 335. The ascetic scientist’s conscience orients him in such a way that the extirpation of his affects in the service of the unconditional pursuit of truth seems appropriate. He fails to employ the intellectual conscience (the “conscience behind his conscience”) and to inquire into the ultimate motivation imploring him to listen to his conscience.

My reading here challenges both Reginster’s interpretation of GM III 24 and his minimalist account of Nietzschean honesty generally. However, it might initially seem problematic for my interpretation that Nietzsche explicitly refers to the ascetic scientists as the “last idealists of knowledge in whom alone the intellectual conscience today dwells” (GM III 24).15,16 This worry can be eased however. Nietzsche does allow that the ascetic scientist possesses one aspect of the intellectual conscience: the aspect related to adopting the theoretical norm on belief formation. However, it is undoubtedly the case that the ascetic scientist fails to possess the other strands of honesty; for example, the self-scrutiny strand and the evaluative strand. The ascetic scientist lacks the ability to identify motivations and drives which might have an overbearing and wildly epistemically pernicious effect on their cognitive and evaluative orientation.

Indeed, GM III 24—along with much of the third essay of The Genealogy—can be read as Nietzsche setting out the history of the unconditional valuation of truth and in so doing coming to identify this final conviction within himself: “I know all of this from too close a proximity perhaps” (GM III 24). Reginster may well be right that the free spirits unfettering of themselves from the unconditional valuation of truth results in the something Nietzsche refers to as the “spirit of inquiry after truth” or “curiosity.” However, the processes through which this liberation is won are identifiable as the fruits of honesty and intellectual consciousness.
SECTION FOUR: NIETZSCHE ON HONESTY AND INTELLECTUAL CONSCIENCE

Reginster associates honesty with the theoretical norm on belief formation. Whilst it seems clear that honesty must include something like this norm, I have argued that it incorporates much more. It incorporates something like the practical norm which Reginster sets out. The norm requiring that one frame “one’s representational relation with the world exclusively with propositional attitudes that aim at truth” (Reginster 2013, 449).

Further, an agent’s evaluative orientation in their environment is understood by Nietzsche to be a part of the agent’s representational relation with the world, and thus to be assessable in terms of honesty (GS 2). This holds even when the relevant aspects of that orientation lie below the level of consciousness. In sections two and three we saw how overbearing drives and the “fundamental will of the spirit” push agents to be oriented in situations in ways which are not adequate to them. The ‘policing’ strand of honesty requires that one work to overcome the influence of epistemically pernicious drives (BGE 230; cf. GS 319). Consider again Murdoch’s scenario in section two. If we suppose that D is in fact delightfully youthful rather than brusque as M would have it, then intellectual conscientiousness demands of M that she attempt to develop an orientation with regard to D which is descriptively and evaluatively more adequate.17

Finally, the strand of honesty bound up with ‘self-scrutiny’ provides a means to rectifying the influence of dominant drives over one’s cognitive and evaluative orientation. Self-scrutiny is an important part of honesty as it is through this process that the individual uncovers convictions and partialities and the ultimate motivations and drives that are responsible for them. A disclaimer is necessary here. This final strand of Nietzschean honesty might seem to be in tension with pronouncements to the effect that a complete knowledge of the arrangement of our drives is impossible: “nothing […] can be more incomplete than [an agent’s] image of the totality of drives which constitute his being” (D 119; cf. GM Preface 1). With this in mind, honesty should not be seen as requiring anything like absolute self-knowledge. Instead, the degree to which (this strand of) honesty is possessed will partly depend on the degree to which one is disposed to attempt self-scrutiny with regard to the drives motivating one’s orientation in one’s environment. It will also partly depend on one’s being (to some extent at least) successful in accurately identifying these motivations and the imprints they leave.

The textual support I have garnered along with two other main factors make my interpretation superior to the minimalistic interpretations of Alfano and Reginster. These are (i) their relative neglect of Nietzsche’s drive psychology and (ii) their assertion that honesty is compatible with the suspension of judgment. (That is, their assertion that honesty is compatible with agents being able to evade the adoption of attitudes evaluable in terms of honesty.) According to the analysis offered above, Nietzsche views representational propositional attitudes that have been taken on under the influence of dominant drives, and in independence of conscious monitoring, to be assessable in terms of honesty (GS 2, GS 335, and BGE 230). It thus seems two options are open to Alfano and Reginster.
Firstly, they could attempt to maintain their minimalistic interpretation by restricting the states they deem to be assessable in terms of honesty to beliefs developed via conscious reflective processes. However, taking this step in spite of the textual evidence concerning Nietzsche’s use of the term is problematic. This option would seem to require that they stipulate that their account applies only to a restricted version of Nietzsche’s conception. This first option is obviously interpretatively problematic and fails to meaningfully address the shortcomings of their accounts. A second option is for them to revise their conception and allow that representational propositional attitudes developed without conscious intervention are honesty-assessable. This would essentially represent their abandonment of their minimalistic conception of honesty. They would have to admit, for example, that honesty is not in fact compatible with the suspension of judgment as they have claimed.

This second option is what is ultimately required. On any picture of Nietzsche’s drive psychology which accommodates his emphasis on the motivational primacy of the drives and their involvement in forming our cognitive perspective, the proliferation of representational propositional attitudes is not something which an agent can simply will to halt. Nietzsche is clear that the organism as a whole is always active in this regard. This holds even if an attempt is made through conscious reflection to suspend the development of representational propositional attitudes.

[A] thought comes when “it” wants, and not when “I” want. (BGE 17)

“I have no idea how I am acting! I have no idea how I ought to act!”—you are right, but be sure of this: you will be acted upon! At every moment! Mankind has in all ages confused the active and the passive. (D 120)

Nietzsche’s picture of the cognitive operations of the agent is instead one on which representational propositional attitudes are constantly being produced. Even if an agent is capable of developing an ephectic stance with regard to some particular subject matter this does not entail that they thereby cease to develop representational propositional attitudes and can thus maintain their intellectually conscientiousness by default. For one thing, conscious control is not absolute. Further, the agent is implicated in the development of representational propositional attitudes relative to their decision to suspend judgment. For example, the subject matter in question may be represented as not worth investigating.

Another point in favor of my interpretation of honesty, is that it is better placed to provide an explanation of how honesty is central to Nietzsche’s project of translating “man back into nature” (BGE 230). Indeed, the discussion of the ascetic scientist in the previous section is indicative. The process of identifying the ultimate motivation underpinning the unconditional valuation of truth is one Nietzsche relates to intellectual conscientiousness. Indeed, he identifies himself with the ascetic scientists in GM III 24 and seems to have identified the unconditional valuation of truth as a subterranean motivation in himself. The uncovering of this conviction is then followed by the identification that the priestly notion of objectivity is a means by which the ascetic scientist’s cognitive and evaluative orientation is influenced by the priest’s drive.
to negate life. Honesty thus works to expose the fact that such a drive is at work and to identify the precise imprint it has on one’s cognitive and evaluative orientation.

Two further points can be made here; if only too briefly and speculatively. The first is that something very much like this kind of method of investigation, which has obviously links with genealogical inquiry, is employed by Nietzsche elsewhere in the service of his project to “de-deify” nature (GS 109). In *Twilight of the Idols*, for example, Nietzsche investigates philosophers’ “hatred of the very idea of becoming” and links this hatred with the way that the grammar of our language and specific “prejudice[s] of reason” have developed (TI *Reason* 1). He then links these developments with our cognitive orientation regarding the plausibility of positing stable and enduring entities; i.e., in positing being underlying the flux and becoming disclosed to us by our senses. “‘Reason’ in language: oh, what a deceptive old woman this is! I am afraid that we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar” (TI *Reason* 5). This particular example can be understood as the identification of an ultimate motivation (drive) in favor of being and stability which fosters a conviction regarding the general stability of the external world. The hypothesis that the very grammar of our language predisposes us to accept such a picture of the external world is a hypothesis concerning how this ultimate motivation influences our cognitive orientation—it is thus an exercise of honesty.

The second point concerns a lingering worry that I have not addressed. One might wonder whether Nietzsche’s drive psychology is compatible with the efficacy of conscious deliberation; even for agents who possess a sharp intellectual conscience. A classic interpretation of Nietzsche as an epiphenomenal is advanced by Brian Leiter (e.g., [2007]). Though there is no space to argue for it here, the view I would want to defend holds that conscious deliberation can be efficacious in changing the mental economy of the drives. My position is thus similar to Katsafanas who argues that “conscious states causally interact with unconscious states, altering the unconscious states in a variety of ways” (2005, 2). Very roughly, the thought would be that conscious reflection can alter the way that particular drives express themselves. It may be true that some drives are essential and, in one sense, fixed: “at our foundation, ‘at the very bottom’, there is clearly something that will not learn, a brick wall of spiritual *fatum*” (BGE 231). An overzealous concern with truth might be one such drive. However, it is possible for conscious deliberation to change the framework through which this drive expresses itself. This can happen when, for example, a conception of knowledge as requiring asceticism is replaced through a prolonged conscious effort with a conception of truth championing creativity and the engagement of one’s drives and affects. The power of the drive to truth may not be weakened by this process, but its mode of operation may be altered.

**CONCLUSION**

Alfano underlines his belief that curiosity is Nietzsche’s central intellectual virtue by arguing that it is a fully ‘cardinal’ virtue. In fact, Alfano makes the further claim that Nietzsche holds a version of the “unity of the virtue thesis,” with curiosity as the fully cardinal and unifying virtue. This conclusion is built on the following definitions and claims: (i) that cardinality requires that: for *V* to be a cardinal virtue, it must be the
case that “having a virtue \( V \) entails having” at least one other virtue, \( V^* \)— “but not conversely” (i.e., having \( V^* \) does not entail having \( V \)). (ii) Full cardinality further requires that there is no virtue that is cardinal with respect to \( V \), and (iii) curiosity is cardinal with respect to every other virtue,\(^{19}\) i.e., “if someone were curious then she would also be courageous, honest and so on” (Alfano, 776). It may be possible, given the above analysis, to argue that Alfano asserts the cardinality of the wrong intellectual virtue. His argument for the cardinality of curiosity leads him to the claim that the possession of honesty is necessary if one is to possess curiosity, but that the reverse is not true; i.e., one can be honest without being curious. Given my arguments, this last claim is false. Nietzsche’s drive psychology is a picture of the drives as constantly working to exercise influence on the cognitive-evaluative orientation of the individual in ways which are epistemically suspect. Nietzschean honesty, as the virtue which plays the role of countering this tendency, thus involves the disposition to seek out the subterranean influence of such drives and correct for them. The bent of mind necessary for this kind of epistemic self-scrutiny requires, amongst other things, the possession of curiosity. Thus, it seems we may have reason to subordinate curiosity to honesty. The claim could then be made that whilst one cannot be honest without being curious, one can be curious without being honest. Perhaps, then, honesty is a ‘cardinal’ intellectual virtue, perhaps even a fully cardinal and unifying virtue.

Support for such an interpretation could be bolstered by looking at direct statements of Nietzsche’s which can be seen to push in this direction. It is honesty and not curiosity, after all, that Nietzsche describes as the definitive virtue of his free spirit (BGE 227). Further, the strapline for the project of his later philosophy—the goal of translating “man back into nature” (BGE 230)—is associated directly with honesty and not with curiosity or any other virtue. I do believe we should take Nietzsche at his word when he states that honesty is of central importance. The further, and more specific question, of whether or not honesty might be considered—according to Alfano’s definitions—a cardinal, fully cardinal, or unifying (intellectual or ethical) virtue for Nietzsche is an interesting topic for further research. For now, however, I wish to refrain from making any positive claim of this type for the following reasons: firstly, one might worry in general about the tactic of reading into Nietzsche doctrines such as the cardinality of an intellectual virtue or the unity of intellectual virtue (as Alfano does [2013, 776]). It strikes me that arguing that one has found an underlying doctrine which informs Nietzsche’s disparate remarks on a large subject area requires a high degree of textual support; i.e. beyond that which I have been able to supply here.

Secondly, in order to argue for the thesis that honesty is Nietzsche’s cardinal intellectual virtue, one would need to explain what confines the traits related with honesty to the realm of intellectual virtue. Or, one would need to do something to indicate how to bound elements of honesty as an intellectual virtue, from honesty as a virtue in the ethical domain. That is, as something necessary for Nietzsche’s ethical goals of creating one’s own values, developing autonomy of will and affirming life. Such a task looks an immensely difficult one.\(^{20}\) It certainly looks as though the development of honesty is not a mere distant enabling condition for these goals but is intimately tied up with their achievement. This is unsurprising if, as argued in sections two and
three, everything from perceptual saliences caused by dominant drives to our general evaluative orientation in the world is seen by Nietzsche as being robustly moral.

These observations raise a plethora of questions concerning just how honesty fits into Nietzsche’s philosophy as a whole and into his ethical thought in particular. These issues whet the appetite for further investigation but are beyond the scope of this paper. We can nonetheless conclude from the above discussion that honesty is of central importance to Nietzsche’s philosophy—even if we should not conclude anything about its status as cardinal or not. Further, the three main passages in which it is described, and which I have sought to explicate the significance of, are strong evidence that Alfano and Reginster not only fail to appreciate the significance of the virtue of honesty, but also mischaracterize it in their minimalist interpretations.21

NOTES

1. As noted, this trend was in many ways foreshadowed by Gemes (1992). Recent commentators have noted that even Nietzsche’s most direct discussion of perspectivism (GM III 12) stops well short of offering a theory of truth. See, for example, Leiter (2002, 270); Janaway (2007, 211); and Berry (2011, ch. 4).


3. This might sound uncontroversial but, as Reginster notes, Nietzsche has been understood to champion an abandonment of the theoretical norm on belief (Reginster 2013, 447).

4. In this paper I treat Nietzsche’s discussion of evaluations as honesty-assessable in GS 2 in terms of the evaluative orientation of an agent in their environment. Aaron Harper (2015) makes the move of treating honesty as a “value standard.” Harper’s account is interesting and insightful on the relation Nietzsche sees as obtaining between honesty and valuing. Indeed, the way he casts values as “standpoints” on the world links with the picture of Nietzsche’s drive psychology I introduce in section two. However, Harper’s account fails to accommodate the other two strands of honesty that I demonstrate Nietzsche’s commitment to in this section; it is thus limited to being an interesting account of one strand of Nietzschean honesty.

5. Jenkins similarly notes—when giving an interpretation of the normativity of belief—the fact that Nietzsche sees an agent’s representational activities as being motivated primarily by factors unrelated to the pursuit of truth: “the function of a belief is to further the expression and expansion of a drive or set of drives, a belief considered merely as such is not open to criticism simply on the ground that it is false” (Jenkins 2012, 273).

6. Indeed, in separate passages dotted throughout his corpus Nietzsche describes how such a drive can take hold of the development of the agent’s cognition and understanding of the world and lead to epistemic impoverishment as the external world is understood through whatever conceptual tools are closest to hand. This point is made with regard to perception (BGE 192), consciousness (GS 354), conceptualization (BGE 230), language (BGE 268), causal explanation (TI Errors 5), and the general processes underling knowledge and understanding (BGE 192, cf. GS 355).

7. To support my treatment of ‘intellectual conscience’ and ‘honesty’ as interchangeable, it should be noted that Nietzsche moves on eight lines later to suggest that this tendency might also be referred to as “a sort of ‘wild honesty’ [Redlichkeit]” (BGE 230).

8. Lane notes, for example that “truthfulness and being erlich are presented as mutually supportive deceptions, which evolve from deceiving others to deceiving themselves.” This is “in stark contrast” to the virtue which Nietzsche more fully esteems: “Redlichkeit.” She explains, for example, that there is an “antithesis between Redlichkeit and self-deception” and an “inaffinity between Redlichkeit and deception of any kind” (Lane 2007, 33).

9. One point to note is that Reginster (but not Alfano) may defend himself against my view by stating that his account was intended to be restricted to the writings of the middle period. Reginster’s paper is entitled “Honesty and Curiosity in Nietzsche’s Free Spirits” and thus might be intended to be restricted to Human, all too Human, Daybreak and the first four books of The Gay Science. This won’t help much however. Though Reginster’s interpretation is slightly more plausible if it is restricted to an account of
honesty as discussed in *Human, all too Human* and *Daybreak*, *The Gay Science* clearly favors my interpretation. The following sections are hard to square with a minimalist reading in any case: HH 65, 73; AOM 145; D 167, 370, 456, 536. Further, Reginster draws from sources from Nietzsche’s later writings and I do not think he would deny that his account is supposed to apply to the later as well as the middle writings. And finally, Lane makes a good case for Nietzsche’s usage of Redlichkeit being related to countering deception and self-deception (and thus encompassing more than the minimalist interpretation can permit) from at least as early as *Daybreak* (e.g., Lane 2007, 34).

10. One might wonder whether jealousy is in fact a drive (or affect). I think we can allow that jealousy would at least function in a similar way to a drive in Murdoch’s scenario—and this is all that is needed for our purposes. I can’t see decisive reasons for not allowing this. Further, Katsafanas does note that Nietzsche directly posits a plethora of drives. This suggests that his picture is one where drives divide and proliferate in local contexts—thus a liberal picture of what counts as a drive seems interpretatively permissible (Katsafanas 2012, 8).

11. It is through noting that drives don’t act in isolation but as part of the organism as a whole that Katsafanas attempts to mitigate worries that his interpretation might be susceptible to homucular-style objections (Katsafanas 2013, 744).

12. The importance of acknowledging that it is precisely the priest’s conception of knowledge that Nietzsche attacks in GM III 12 is made by Gemes (2013, 567).

13. Nietzsche continues to develop these thoughts in the next section where he laments the fact that: “[s]cience also rests on the same ground as the ascetic ideal when calculated physiologically: a certain impoverishment of life is a presupposition here as well as there—the affects become cool, the tempo slowed, dialectic in place of instinct, seriousness impressed on faces and gestures” (GM III 25).

14. In his account of Nietzsche’s critique of the unconditional will to truth, Jenkins links the will to truth with asceticism because it is unlimited in scope and takes the pursuit of truth to be a goal which overrides all other goals (Jenkins 2012, 277–82). I see Jenkins’s account as broadly consonant with the interpretation I give here. However, Jenkins does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that the conception of knowledge which underpins the ascetic scientist’s will to truth is a key factor in motivating Nietzsche to label that will to truth as ascetic. This conception being, after all, that which originated in the ascetic priest’s notion of objectivity.

15. Another point in defense of my view can be made here. This is that it is not clear whether, when Nietzsche employs the term ‘intellectual conscience’ here, he is giving voice to his own description of the ascetic scientist or, instead, their self-description. Evidence for the latter option comes from the fact that, in the very same sentence, Nietzsche sets about exposing the mistaken nature of the ascetic scientist’s description of themselves as “pale-atheists, anti-Christians” etc., by pointing out that though they “believe themselves to be as detached as possible from the ascetic ideal” they are not (GM III 24).

16. Nietzsche refers the honesty as “the youngest virtue” in D 456 (see Lane [2007] for further discussion on how this young virtue is related to but distinct from other kinds of truthfulness). Thus, it might also seem plausible to understand Nietzsche as attributing one instantiation of honesty to the ascetic scientist. On this reading, Nietzsche’s move to call the conviction relating to the unconditional valuation of truth into question at the end of GM III 24, would be understood as his attempt to add content to the virtue of honesty. Nietzsche’s description of honesty as “hardly aware of itself [. . .] something in process of becoming which we can advance or obstruct as we see fit” would gel nicely with this interpretation (D 456).

17. In this paper, I have focused on honesty—this strand of it at least—as a negative force: a force to counteract the excessive, and epistemically deleterious, effects of other drives on our cognitive and evaluative orientation. I haven’t had space to develop an account of how such deleterious effects might be counteracted. However, Nietzsche’s remarks concerning creative techniques for forming new interpretations seem to me to be the place where one should look to uncover such an account. It is no coincidence that Nietzsche describes the “essence of all interpreting” (GM III 24) in terms similar to those which he uses to describe the “techniques of artists” (GS 299). Further, Nietzsche associates artistry with a drive to “force out the main features” of a given subject matter, which coincides with the strand of honesty under discussion here—i.e., the demand to be adequately oriented with regard to the external world and to have one’s representational propositional attitudes appropriately weighted (TI 349).

18. See Berry (2011, ch. 4) for an interesting account of Nietzsche’s relation to Pyrrhonian Skepticism and the practice of ephexis in interpretation.
19. Or, to be precise, every other virtue except creativity, which Alfano reads as being the only virtue which does not fall “under the umbrella of curiosity” (Alfano, 776).

20. Reginster notes the sticky territory here and allows that the virtue which the free spirit possesses may stretch beyond merely the epistemic domain (Reginster 2013, 456 n.26).

21. Many thanks to Andrew Reisner for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Thanks also to Ken Gemes and Andrew Huddleston for suggesting helpful revisions and clarifications in the editing process.

REFERENCES

WORKS BY NIETZSCHE (WITH ABBREVIATION):

OTHER WORKS:

