Sexism is Exhausting: Nietzsche and the Emotional Dynamics of Sexist Oppression

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Penultimate draft

Introduction

It might seem odd to look to Nietzsche, a philosopher infamous for his explicitly sexist remarks, for theoretical tools to illuminate the emotional dynamics of oppression.[1] Yet in his descriptions of the social shaping of emotion and the exhausting, obstructive impacts of internalizing harmful social norms, Nietzsche offers us tools for doing just that. My analysis here is situated in the context of gender oppression and sexism.[2] Specifically, I focus on the emotional dynamics of gender oppression in the context of a cis-hetero patriarchy: a sociocultural milieu characterized by the historical domination of cisgender, heterosexual men and subordination of women via the unequal distribution of power. A patriarchal society will be one that features a predominance of men rather than women in positions of social, political, and economic power, as well as more subtle features (such as the fixing of allegedly gender-typical traits, behaviors, and roles).[3]

The emotional dynamics of oppression – and the oppressive effects of particular socially produced emotions – have been analyzed by numerous scholars in feminist philosophy, critical race theory, and beyond.[4] My claim, then, is not that one *must* read Nietzsche in order to analyze these phenomena or make them intelligible; I cannot even promise that his account will be more illuminating for the reader than these others. Rather, I aim here to add one more account to those on offer, to provide one more way in which the emotional dynamics of oppression, especially gender oppression,

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[1] My sincere thanks to Rebecca Bamford, Ian Dunkle, Allison Merrick, and Justin Messmore for their feedback on early versions of this paper.

[2] In discussing gender oppression and sexism, it is important not to ignore the fact that these phenomena are experienced and lived differently depending on other aspects of one's identity and circumstance, such as race (Crenshaw 1989, Hill Collins 1991, Lorde 1984), gender identity or sexuality (Bettcher 2007, 2017; Serano 2007; Whittle 2006), and other factors.

[3] A cis-hetero patriarchy will also be characterized by 1) the domination of cisgender men and the subordination of individuals who are not cisgender and 2) the domination of heterosexual men and the subordination of individuals who are not heterosexual. Explaining the complex, interwoven dynamics of domination and subordination that occur as a function of these is not something I have space to do in this paper.

[4] Lorde 1981; Pierce 1974; Berlant 2011; Pratt-Clarke 2014; Smith, Allen, and Danley 2007; Sullivan 2017; Whitney 2018.

might be articulated. In turn, I emphasize how comprehending and articulating these phenomena with the help of a Nietzschean lens might make clearer certain of oppression's characteristic harms.

In this paper, then, I examine a set of theoretical tools Nietzsche offers for making sense of the emotional dynamics and psychophysiological impacts of sexist oppression. Specifically, I indicate how Nietzsche's account of the social and cultural production of emotional experience (i.e. his account of the transpersonal nature of emotional experience) can serve as a conceptual resource for understanding the detrimental emotional impacts of social norms, beliefs, and practices that systematically devalue certain of one's ends and interests.[5]

To begin, I offer a Nietzschean account of emotional experience that focuses on its transpersonal nature. As I argue below, one's emotional experiences do not occur in isolation from one's social or cultural context; rather, emotional experience – and the transformative force it carries with it – is often a result of the way one's instincts, interests, and ends interface with the interpretation or assessment of them at the levels of society and culture. Then, I demonstrate how certain features of Nietzsche's account help us make sense of one mechanism by which the emotional productions of a patriarchal culture – one with a "patriarchal ideology" that has sexism as its natural "outgrowth"[6] – subject women to certain cultural or social norms and potentially result in exhaustion, detachment from their own values or ends, personal stagnation, and self-loathing.[7]

Nietzsche on affectivity

Since emotions are a subset of Nietzschean affects, understanding the emotional dynamics of internalization and the transpersonal nature of emotional experience requires one to understand Nietzsche's account of affectivity.[8] In what follows, I do not intend to offer a comprehensive account of affect. Instead, I aim to provide a characterization of affect that emphasizes the transpersonal nature

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[5] On this point see Merrick (in this volume) "How We Became Who We Are: Concerning Nietzsche's Genealogy of Politicized Identity."

[6] Manne 2019, 33.

[7] When I speak of the (typically unconscious) assimilation of certain attitudes, norms, and beliefs, I am describing what is colloquially referred to as internalization. Importantly, however, "internalization (*Verinnerlichung*)" is a term with a specific meaning and significance in Nietzsche's work: it results when instincts that cannot be discharged, or expressed outwardly, are then expressed inwardly (GM II:16). It is important to attend to this difference, especially because Nietzschean internalization, as the turning of one's instincts against oneself, seems to result when certain sociocultural norms and beliefs are (colloquially) internalized.

[8] The topic of affect in Nietzsche has been treated by a variety of scholars in recent literature (Poellner 2007; Janaway 2009a; Anderson 2012; Clark and Dudrick 2012; Bamford 2014; Katsafanas 2016; Mitchell 2017; Creasy 2018, 2020, 2022; Kail 2018; Bamford 2019; Leiter 2019; Fowles 2020). Not only does Nietzsche catalogue a variety of specific emotions and their characteristic impacts; he also describes certain general functions that affects play (for example, in shaping perceptual and moral experience, epistemic perspectives, and evaluative orientations).

of emotional experience – that is, the way in which the emotions one experiences first-personally are shaped by sociocultural milieux that transcend the individual. A key part of the story Nietzsche tells about the transpersonal nature of emotional experience is the tendency of individuals to unwittingly adopt sociocultural norms and evaluations – even those norms and evaluations that ultimately prove harmful to the individual.

Most basically, Nietzsche understands affects as evaluative feelings.[9] These evaluative feelings – these "reactions of the will" (KSA 13:11[71]) often associated with somatic states of arousal (BGE 19, 259; KSA 13:15[111], [118]) – incline or disincline individuals in particular directions (D 34), towards or against certain objects (behaviors, beliefs, desires, and even other affects).[10] As inclinations and disinclinations, affects have motivational force: the affects I experience motivate my decisions and behaviors and dispose me to particular beliefs. The "motivational oomph"[11] a particular affect carries with it – the way in which that affect inclines or disinclines me towards a particular object, decision, or behavior – results from the (positive or negative) valence of the affect. Additionally, Nietzsche believes affects originate in drives, which function to "induce" specific affects and affective orientations.[12] Finally, affective states typically have a phenomenal character: there is something it is like to be under the influence of a particular affect.[13]

Recognizing that affects originate in drives allows us to understand why affects are fundamentally *evaluative* feelings. As John Richardson points out, a drive's end-directed nature is such that it always already "'polarizes' the world towards it"[14]: a drive is positively disposed towards those features of the world that aid or make possible its expression and negatively disposed towards those features of the world that hinder or make its expression impossible.

The sociality of emotional experience

Crucially, however, the emotions one experiences (and thus, the beliefs, behaviors, and objects towards which one is inclined or disinclined in virtue of these emotions) are not merely a function of

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[9] His reflections on value-feelings (*Werthgefühlen)*, both in his published work (D 148; BGE 4; 186) and in the *Nachlass* (KSA 12:6[25], 6:[26]; 9:[1], [62]; 10:[2], [23], [49], [168] and KSA 13:14[185], 15[17]) are illuminating here, especially as he sometimes uses "Werthgefühlen" and "Affekte" interchangeably (KSA 12:6[26], 10[168] and KSA 13:14[185]).

[10] Though Nietzsche very frequently associates affects with somatic states (and even sometimes seems to identify them as such), it is unclear whether or not Nietzsche intends to establish a strict identity between affects and somatic states.

[11] Leiter 2019, 70.

[12] Katsafanas 2016, 94.

[13] Mitchell 2017, 41; Kail 2018, 238; Leiter 2019, 70. I say "typically" here because Nietzsche seems to think that affective states are not always consciously experienced or articulable by the individual who is subject to them.

[14] Richardson 1996, 36.

culturally-independent individual drives. Indeed, according to Nietzsche, one's emotional experience often results from the ways in which one's drives, qualities, and behaviors are conceptualized and assessed at the level of one's culture or society, and how that is implicitly or explicitly communicated to the individual. Such assessments have the power to shape one's emotional experience whether or not the individual is consciously aware of them or able to articulate their value-laden content. Broadly put, emotional experience is transpersonal, or socially shaped: though I understand the emotions I experience as my own, this experience is produced in part by the interaction between myself and the world to which I belong. Thus, the causal story of the vast majority of emotional experiences will exceed or transcend the individual. In Nietzsche's analysis of cowardice and humility from *Daybreak,* we find a clear example of this.

> The same drive evolves into the painful feeling of cowardice under the impress of the reproach custom has imposed upon this drive: or into the pleasant feeling of humility if it happens that a custom such as the Christian has taken it to its heart and called it good. That is to say, it is attended by either a good or a bad conscience! In itself it has, like every drive, neither this moral character nor any moral character at all, nor even a definite attendant sensation of pleasure or displeasure: it acquires all this, as its second nature, only when it enters into relations with drives already baptized good or evil… (D 38)

In this example, whether one experiences the emotion of cowardice or that of humility depends on the customary beliefs and norms one assimilates. So it is that "custom" (in the form of customary beliefs or values) taken "to… heart," has the power to shape emotional experience (D 35): specifically, those customary beliefs, values, and norms endemic to my sociocultural context often impact how an emotion shows up for me, shaping the form emotional experience takes, the motivational force that experience (as inclination or disinclination) carries with it, and its intensity.[15]

Understanding the sociocultural formation of emotional experience requires one to understand that, for Nietzsche, the beliefs, values, and norms assimilated by an individual shape their emotional experience, in turn influencing how the object provoking the emotion shows up in experience.[16] For almost any given emotion, there is an object (or set of objects) that typically provokes that emotion (the "stimulus object"), an object (or set of objects) at which the emotion is directed (the

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[15] Creasy 2020.

[16] My account here expands upon that of R. Lanier Anderson (2012) and utilizes the helpful terminology he employs. In his work distinguishing between Nietzschean drives and affects, R. Lanier Anderson suggests that unlike drives, which have a characteristic "aim/object structure," affects involve 1) a "stimulus object"; 2) "a *default* behavioral response"; and 3) a specific "emotional 'coloring'" that shapes the way the intentional object is encountered in experience (2012 218-9).

intentional object), and a typical behavioral outcome.[17] In addition, there is an "emotional coloring" to every emotional experience – a felt dimension of emotional experience comprised of its quality (which includes felt intensity) and valence – that both impacts how the intentional object shows up and shapes the particular behavioral response one has.[18] To say that the emotional coloring of a particular emotional experience impacts how the intentional object shows up is to say that it both determines 1) how one assesses the intentional object at hand and 2) which features of the intentional object become salient, standing out to the individual in the throes of a particular emotion, and which go unnoticed. To say that an emotion's coloring shapes the particular behavioral response one has is to say that the specific form that the tended behaviors of a given emotional experience take – the "pattern and the manner of the agent's default response"[19]– is determined by the quality and valence of the emotion at hand. As an example of this mechanism, we can look to Nietzsche's characterization of *ressentiment*.[20] The experience of *ressentiment* as "the most spiritual and poisonous kind of hatred" (GM I 7) is such that it typically results in a pursuit of revenge that is especially insidious and all-consuming. Fleeting, comparatively benign forms of *ressentiment*, on the other hand, tend to "consummate[] and exhaust[themselves] in an immediate reaction" (GM I).

Understanding this structure of emotions is critical for understanding one way in which Nietzsche believes emotional experience to be transpersonal. Indeed, as Nietzsche argues, what functions as the "appropriate" intentional object of a given emotion (in the language of contemporary philosophy of emotion, a "fitting" intentional object) – is shaped by the society to which one belongs. Nietzsche's analysis of the feeling of sin from *Human, All too Human* 133 illustrates this. In this passage, Nietzsche claims that the phenomenal character of "sin" crucially involves a representation of a deity, God, and that this representation colors the emotional experience itself, adding an extra "sting" or "pang[] of conscience" to the feeling. Yet importantly, this representation — that of the Christian God, or maybe a world created by and for God — is a cultural transmission, communicated to one through a variety of social and cultural institutions. A comprehensive causal story of how emotions feel and the impact they have on the individual thus cannot be reduced merely to the workings of an

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[17] I say "almost" here because a select number of affects lack a clear intentional object.
[18] Again, this language of emotional coloring comes from Anderson (2012 219). Although this term is helpfully broad when speaking generally about the felt dimension of emotional experience, the emotional coloring of an emotional experience can be separated into (at least) two critical constituent parts: its quality (which includes the intensity of the experience) and its valence. Doing justice to Nietzsche's various descriptions of emotional experiences and their functions requires one to specify these.
[19] Ibid, 219.
[20] Anderson 2012 does the same.

individual's psychophysiological constitution. Any such story must also include an account of the sociocultural context in which one finds oneself, given that emotional experiences are frequently a byproduct of this context. Although drives induce affects, a description of the particular drives (and the corresponding activities at which those drives aim) that an individual has will not be enough to explain the origin or character of her emotional experiences. Rather, any explanation of a particular emotional experience for Nietzsche will involve a description of certain sociocultural facts and features.

My account here neatly dovetails with Peter Poellner's claim that affects are "co-constituted in their phenomenal, experienced character by representations of the world or aspects of it."[21] As we see above, beliefs, values, and norms often play a critical part in constituting my emotional experience (that is, its emotional coloring, or the quality and valence of the experience). Such content, in turn, impacts how the intentional object shows up, since the intentional object is always-already filtered through this emotional coloring.[22] In other words, beliefs, values, and norms that originate from outside of me (from my sociocultural milieu) frequently play a role in constituting the quality of my emotional experience, which in turn shapes my encounter with a given intentional object. Attending to this helps us understand a critical part of emotional experience's transpersonal nature: that is, my experience of such intentional objects is influenced not only by my drives, but by sociocultural factors (such as beliefs, norms, value-laden representations of individuals and behaviors, etc.). Otherwise put, my emotional experience is always-already informed by the society and culture in which I find myself.

Think back to Nietzsche's remarks on sin and the pangs of conscience from *Human, All too Human*, where he notes that "if the idea of God falls away, so does the feeling of 'sin' as a transgression against divine precepts, as a blemish on a creature consecrated to god" (133). He continues:

> Then there probably still remains over that feeling of depression which is very much entwined with and related to fear of punishment by secular justice or the disapprobation of other men; the depression caused by the pang of conscience, the sharpest sting in the feeling of guilt, is nonetheless abolished when one sees that, although one's actions may have offended against human tradition, human laws and ordinances, one has not therewith endangered the 'eternal salvation of the soul' and its relationship to divinity. (HH 133)

In this aphorism, Nietzsche describes how the emotion of guilt, experienced as sin, has a different emotional coloring – a different quality, involving a much more intense "sting" – because I experience

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[21] Poellner 2009, 161.

[22] The behavioral outcomes that follow are also determined, in part, by these features.

the emotion as one who believes in a deity to which I am consecrated (or, at least, as one who has unwittingly, perhaps unconsciously, assimilated it into their mental and moral economy).[23] The intentional object encountered – whether it be certain of one's actions, one's nature, or one's desires – is filtered through the emotional coloring of one's emotional experience, for example, the feeling of sinfulness as involving the disapprobation of an entity to which one owes one's existence and the eternal damnation of a sinner's soul. To say that the "sharpest sting" in the feeling of guilt goes away when the idea of god disappears is to acknowledge that the quality of one's emotional experience – the intensity of the feeling, the depth of one's guilt – can be shaped by beliefs, values, or norms that one either consciously adopts or unwittingly assimilates, and that a change in one's beliefs, values, or norm-exposure potentially changes the emotional coloring of an emotional experience, thus changing how one encounters an intentional object. Specifically, when one's emotional experience is no longer influenced by notions of a deity and eternal damnation, my experience of the emotion of guilt (*qua* sinfulness in the face of god) formerly experienced in relation to one's nature transforms into a different kind of emotional experience (perhaps guilt *qua* lawlessness), and this changes the way the intentional object shows up: what was formerly encountered as a sinful action is now encountered as a merely antisocial or illegal action. Both the quality of my experience of the new guilty emotion (guilt *qua* lawlessness) and the intentional object (one's action, newly encountered as merely antisocial or illegal rather than sinful) transform along with one's beliefs. Given the connection between the emotional coloring of an emotion (especially its valence) and its motivational force, the motivational force of the emotion seems likely to transform as well. For example, one might imagine that the "sharpest sting" or pang of conscience unique to guilt *qua* sinfulness is also uniquely motivational: that is, it disinclines one more intensely against certain actions or desires.

For Nietzsche, then, it is critical to recognize that our emotional experiences are mediated by ideas, values, and norms – beliefs and norms of which one unconsciously or consciously avails oneself that plays an integral role in shaping an emotional experience. And these ideas, values, and norms derive from one's society and/or culture. In other words, one's affects – those feeling-based states most often understood as individual psychological states or processes – are often socially and culturally

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[23] For an example of how one might profess disbelief in a god but still assimilate the idea of a god into their mental economy (in a way that impacts emotional experience), see Lindeman et. al (2014). In this study, an explicitly stated disbelief in god did not prevent emotional states that seemed to result from assimilating the idea of a deity or god. Cases such as those outlined by this study show that the quality of one's emotional experience can still be shaped by an idea that is not an explicitly avowed belief. Such an idea can then play a role in shaping one's encounter with the intentional object at hand: in the case of the study, a requested curse on one's family.

produced.[24] This is the case even though we typically experience those emotions of which we are consciously aware as our own personal feelings in relation to an intentional object: although we experience them as such, our feelings are rarely our own.

The sociocultural construction of appropriate emotions

For Nietzsche, our discovery of the surreptitious features of affectivity mentioned above – the malleability of our emotional lives, and the incredibly subtle way in which it occurs via ideas, beliefs, values, and norms we (often unwittingly) assimilate in virtue of our social or cultural milieux– is meant to be surprising, and perhaps unpleasant. Yet this discovery becomes all the more unpleasant – and the social shaping of emotion all the more pernicious – when one attends to the way in which, for Nietzsche, my emotional responses are "experienced as… appropriate response[s] to some feature of the object, as a picking up on some value-aspect pertaining to the object."[25] Otherwise put, I generally experience my emotional responses as fitting responses to the intentional object in question, whether or not they are, in fact, merited by that object.[26] In my emotional encounter with a given intentional object, I typically experience myself as 'picking up on' or 'discovering' certain value-laden properties of the object itself: that is, prior to any reflection on my emotional encounters, I experience them as disclosive, rather than deceptive. For example, when someone experiences an emotion of guilt *qua* sinfulness in response to one of their actions or desires, they experience said action or desire (that is, whatever intentional object provoked that emotion) as meriting this negative, disapprobatory emotion: that is, they encounter their action or desire as something bad or undesirable *in itself*. This emotional experience disinclines one towards the action or desire in question. The tended behavioral result, then, would be the avoidance of said action or desire.

As another example, imagine the emotional response of love, inspired by the presence of one's partner. When I experience this emotion in the presence of my partner, I *experience* it as merited by features of my significant other that are inherently *worthy* of love (perhaps his compassionate nature or his sense of humor). This experience then tends to result in certain positive behaviors: for example,

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[24] Of course, Nietzsche wants to leave room for individuals who work to lessen the influence of dominant sociocultural beliefs and norms on their emotional lives through practices of genealogy, self-knowledge, and self-genealogy. See Creasy 2020 for more on this.

[25] Poellner 2009, 162.

[26] Note here, by the way, that I use "appropriate" and "fitting" interchangeably, to refer to emotional responses that are warranted by the object that provokes them. Importantly, however, my claim here is not about the *actual* fittingness of one's emotional responses, but the perceived fittingness of one's emotional responses. Additionally, whenever I intend to refer to the apparent *moral* appropriateness or moral permissibility of emotions, I will indicate that. If there is no such indication, "appropriate" should be read as non-moral fittingness.

I might praise him for his compassion or feel inspired to become more compassionate myself. Importantly for Nietzsche, however, this does not indicate that these features – my partner's compassionate nature and sense of humor – are *in fact* worthy of love; rather, this is just the way his compassion appears to me in the throes of that particular loving emotion.

To make this clearer, we can imagine instances in which I might become irritated by my partner's compassionate nature. For example, if my partner decided to donate half of our savings to charity, his compassionate nature might inspire a good deal of anger in me.[27] In the throes of this quite different emotion, I experience his compassionate nature as something negative, something that "calls for" an angry response. This angry emotional response would tend to manifest itself in particular behaviors: for example, I might say unkind things to my partner or sell one of his prized possessions to recoup our lost savings. In the grip of this emotion, however, such assessments and behaviors would seem appropriate: that is, merited by my partner's nature, which I experience as compassionate to a fault.[28] In sum, love might seem a fitting response to his compassionate nature in one case, but in quite another case, anger will seem just as fitting. In either case, we see that the default experience of a given emotional response is to experience the emotion as a fitting response, and to experience the intentional object – my partner's compassionate nature, in these examples – as meriting just that response that I do, in fact, have. Part of experiencing an emotion in response to a particular intentional object, then, is an implicit assessment of that intentional object: I 'view' the intentional object as worthy of whatever emotional response I experience, such that if my emotional experience is positive,

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[27] Susan Wolf's description of allegedly fitting responses to moral sainthood comes to mind here.

[28] This example is perhaps a bit tricky, since apart from this angry emotional response seeming fitting or appropriate to me in the throes of that emotional experience, such a response might seem to be *actually* appropriate. Here, it might seem my partner's compassionate nature is *actually* worthy of an angry response. Thus, the assessments and behaviors I describe above are in fact fitting. Otherwise put, while my emotional response might shape my experience of the intentional object (my partner's compassionate nature) in this example, I have good reason to judge his nature negatively here. (Thanks to Ian Dunkle for suggesting I address this worry.) I include the above example just to illustrate how affectivity shapes one's experience and evaluation of a given intentional object, in such a way that one immediately takes one's evaluation to be fitting (that is, one understands it to be picking up on value-laden properties of the object itself). But it might be helpful to include another example in which it is perhaps less likely that the intentional object is *actually* worthy of my particular emotional response. Imagine that early in the week I promise my partner to do the dishes as soon as I get some free time. Noticing that I am extraordinarily busy revising a book chapter and that the dishes are continuing to pile up, he decides late in the week to do the dishes himself, hoping it will relieve me of a burden and prove helpful. When I see the empty sink and he explains that he wanted to help out, I feel insulted, patronized, and annoyed. Here, too, my emotional response leads me to experience his compassionate nature as something negative, something that "calls for" a feeling of insulted frustration. Seized by insult and annoyance, I put the dishes from the dishwasher back into the sink so that I can do them myself. As long as I am still "in the grip" of this experience, I experience my evaluations and actions as fitting responses to my partner's compassionate nature, which I feel patronized by. In this case, although it is perhaps less obvious that my emotional response is *actually* fitting (and that his compassionate nature is *actually* worthy of insulted frustration), I still experience it as such. This leads me to negatively assess his compassionate nature.

I experience the value of the intentional object as positive – and if my emotional experience is negative, I experience the value of the intentional object as negative.

Though Nietzsche believes I pre-reflectively experience my emotional responses as merited by their intentional objects, he is also keen to indicate that my sense of their appropriateness does not occur in a vacuum. On the contrary, my emotional experiences unfold in a social context permeated by powerfully dominant beliefs, norms, and values – and my sense of their appropriateness can also be shaped by what my society understands as appropriate or inappropriate emotions, given a particular intentional object. Although Nietzsche believes my psychophysiological constitution plays a role in how I experience and come to assess the intentional objects I encounter, this is not the whole picture. Indeed, objects often come to me imbued with a nature and value my society, culture, or ideological community establishes for them. See, for example, GS 355:

> Your judgment, '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 there?' and then also, '*what* is really impelling me to listen to it?' …But that you hear this or that judgement as the words of conscience, i.e. that you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labelled right since your childhood; or in the fact that fulfilling your duties has so far brought you bread and honors—

It is thus the case *both* that I experience my initial emotional responses as accurately picking up on value-laden aspects of the intentional object *and* that value-laden aspects tend to be "pre-loaded" into the object of emotional experience, as a function of dominant norms and beliefs within a given sociocultural milieu or ideological community. For example, in a culture dominated by the "morality of compassion [Mitleid]" (TI "Skirmishes" 37) – a culture in which a belief in the positive value of compassionate action is the norm – selfish actions will be understood as meriting disapprobatory emotions (perhaps disdain). From the perspective of such a culture, the fitting emotional response to selfishness (or a particular selfish action) will be negatively valenced one, one that discourages selfish thoughts and behaviors (whether these are actions of one's own or of another).

Let us continue with this typically Nietzschean example – that of compassion – to illustrate this point.[29] According to Nietzsche, his particular Christian sociocultural milieu is one dominated by the "morality of compassion [Mitleid]" (TI "Skirmishes" 37): compassion is a praiseworthy character

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[29] Note here that I am translating *Mitleid* as compassion rather than pity. I do this to keep this portion of the paper consistent with the example above of my partner's compassionate nature.

trait; compassionate acts are worthy of admiration and respect; and a drive to compassion is understood to be a virtuous instinct.[30] In such an environment, compassion is viewed as an objectively positive trait (BGE 201-2; GM P, 5-6), and as such, compassionate actions seem to "call for" positive emotional responses: that is, such actions appear to warrant respect and admiration in every case. If in such a sociocultural context I view compassionate actions negatively – experience a negative emotion, such as anger, in response to someone's compassionate deed – my reaction appears to me as errant, one that indicts me and my emotional life rather than the intentional object. In other words, since a compassionate deed in Nietzsche's Christian-moral Europe does not warrant anger, irritation, or frustration, to be frustrated in the face of compassion is to react *inappropriately*. In this way, I encounter compassionate actions *qua intentional* objects as pre-loaded with positive value, bestowed by my sociocultural context. When I experience an approbatory emotion in response to a compassionate action, my emotional life gels with the emotional patterns and values typical of my sociocultural milieu, insofar as I pick up on positive aspects of the intentional object. My reaction appears, to myself and others, as "normal" and appropriate.

When I experience a disapprobatory emotion in response to a compassionate action, on the other hand, my emotional life seems at odds with dominant beliefs, values, and even emotional patterns. When a compassionate action appears to me, in the throes of a disapprobatory emotion, as undesirable or meriting blame, the social norm which construes compassionate action as objectively positive comes into conflict with my subjective, first-personal emotional experience. My emotional experience here is at odds with what is thought morally appropriate or "normal." In such a case, Nietzsche thinks, I am all-too-likely to feel I am perceiving wrongly, and to develop emotions that discourage the kinds of valuations and behaviors that diverge from the emotional patterns and norms of my sociocultural milieu (TI "Skirmishes" 45). Furthermore, the more one assimilates this dominant norm, the more likely one is to develop positive, approbatory emotional responses to compassion (that I experience as fitting) and the less likely one is to have negative, disapprobatory emotional responses (those that experience compassion as something shameful or blameworthy). After some time, I will not only be in an emotional habit of experiencing positive emotional responses to compassionate actions (which just is, for Nietzsche, to experience them as fitting); I will also eventually judge the former to be morally appropriate responses and the latter morally inappropriate responses.

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[30] On the other hand, "[s]trong ages, *noble* cultures see in compassion [*Mitleid*], in 'loving one's neighbor,' in a lack of self and of self-esteem, something contemptible" (TI, "Skirmishes," 37).

Before I continue, let me flag something critically important. When talking about the fittingness or appropriateness of emotions, as D'Arms and Jacobson[31] argue, one ought to avoid committing the "moralistic fallacy": conflating the conditions of an emotion's fittingness (that is, the extent to which it accurately represents its object, or "gets it right") with whether or not that emotion is morally acceptable to feel (or "morally permissible").[32] Too often, they argue, philosophers commit this fallacy; most often, it involves descriptively designating an emotion as an unfitting (*qua* unwarranted) response to a given intentional object on the grounds that the emotional response is morally impermissible. In the language of D'Arms and Jacobson: philosophers frequently interpret an emotional response as not "getting it right" simply because it is not "the [morally] right way to feel."[33]

I want to be clear: I grant this conceptual distinction. D'Arms and Jacobson are right that there seem to be two different senses of appropriateness operating in philosophical debates about emotions and their fittingness. My Nietzschean account here, however, is about how one *experiences* one's emotional responses as fitting or appropriate to the intentional objects one encounters (which are encountered through a particularly valenced emotional lens), and how that experience of fittingness is influenced both by what is widely accepted as a fitting emotional response (that is, an accurate reflection of the object one encounters) *and* what is widely accepted as a morally appropriate response. Nietzsche's point, it seems to me, is that insofar as our emotions are mediated by our norm-laden sociocultural context or ideological community, we are vulnerable to a kind of emotional gaslighting in which we doubt the warrant of our emotional responses because of the internalization of certain norms and values, including norms of moral appropriateness. And indeed, this is one special danger of internalizing or assimilating certain norms or values from my sociocultural milieu or ideological community. When such internalization or assimilation occurs, I become both alienated from those goals, interests, and values I have that are discordant with the norms and values of my society and alienated from (and discouraged from inhabiting) my own evaluative perspective on the world. Not only do I doubt certain desires or practices of mine; I doubt the warrant or rationality of my own phenomenological experience.

My sociocultural context has the power to shape my emotional life, then, by increasing the likelihood that I will experience emotions that are widely deemed appropriate (or warranted) in that context. This happens as I unreflectively assimilate ideas, values, and norms in virtue of my

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[31] D'Arms and Jacobson 2000.
[32] Ibid, 66.
[33] Ibid.

sociocultural milieu. In such cases, the evaluation of the intentional object manifest in my emotional experience accords with that of my society: I have what my society understands to be an appropriate response to the intentional object of my emotional experience. This happens, for example, when I experience guilt *qua* sinfulness in response to a cruel action of mine *because* I have assimilated a particular conception of God (in virtue of my belonging to a society dominated by Christian beliefs and norms). At other times, however, my initial emotional experience – and its implicit evaluation of the intentional object – will be incongruous with those emotional experiences deemed appropriate within my broader sociocultural context. Imagine, for example, that I experience an emotion of pride in response to the same action. Given my assimilation of those beliefs and norms characteristic of my Christian society, I am likely to understand such an emotion as deeply inappropriate – and to develop, perhaps, a second-order affect of shame in response. This second-order affect functions to disincline me against my initial prideful response (in relation to the intentional object of my own cruel action). Otherwise put, when one assimilates socially dominant beliefs, values, and norms, one becomes likely to experience second-order affects that discourage emotional responses discordant with those deemed "appropriate"[34] by one's sociocultural milieu. In short, those second-order affects produced in me in virtue of my assimilating dominant sociocultural norms and values – feelings of disinclination or inclination towards my first-order affects – nudge me away from "inappropriate" emotions and towards "appropriate" emotions given a particular intentional object. When my emotional responses evaluate the intentional object in a way that conflicts with the dominant social evaluation, these competing emotions will tend to be stifled. At the very least, I come to second-guess those responses.

And indeed, my assimilation of norms that direct me *away from* "inappropriate" emotional experiences and *towards* more "appropriate" socially dominant emotional patterns is made all the more likely just in virtue of my continued habitation of a particular social or cultural milieu in which such norms prevail. As Nietzsche makes clear, one's tendency to assimilate such norms is often simply a function of one's exposure to a given norm; the more dominant a norm is in one's society, the more likely one is to absorb it (GM II 24). We see this, for example, in Nietzsche's account of the way in which ascetic ideals, as they become more widespread, cause strong-willed individuals to become suspicious of their instincts and drives. When those who embrace ascetic ideals "*shov[e]* their own misery… *on to the conscience* of the happy…the latter eventually start to be ashamed of their happiness"

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[34] I put "appropriate" in scare quotes here to indicate that sense of an emotion's alleged fittingness that is widespread within a given sociocultural context/ideological community.

(GM III 14). Through the mere exposure to life-denying beliefs and ideals, strong-willed individuals "begin to doubt their *right to happiness"* – hence, the importance of the *pathos of distance* (ibid).[35]

Internalization, self-suspicion, and the development of a self-negating conscience

If emotions are socioculturally mediated, regulated, and produced in the ways I describe above – and Nietzsche believes they are – then those emotional evaluations of intentional objects that I experience as merited by the object itself are surreptitiously shaped by the sociocultural context I inhabit. In particular, I am typically nudged *towards* those emotional responses deemed appropriate by my sociocultural milieu and *away from* those deemed inappropriate. This, in itself, is interesting. But in cases where the intentional objects of emotional experiences are my own actions, desires, traits, or instincts, attending to this structure becomes critically important from a Nietzschean perspective. After all, the more I experience affective aversions to certain of my actions, desires, traits, and instincts as *merited* by these intentional objects – the more I "[view my] natural inclinations with an 'evil eye'" (GM II:24) – the more likely I am to develop a second-order evaluative sensibility that turns me against my own instincts, desires, and aims. This aversive sensibility – which I will henceforth refer to as self-suspicion – develops when I habitually experience affective aversions to features of myself, as a function of my assimilating beliefs, values, and social norms (in virtue of their inhabiting a particular sociocultural milieu) that are at odds with (or in conflict with) my instincts, desires, and aims.[36] Though Nietzsche himself does not employ this specific term, self-suspicion is a psychological sensibility and feature of our inner lives in which is profoundly interested.[37]

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[35] The contagion of emotion – made possible by a fundamental affective vulnerability that characterizes all individuals – is another, less subtle way in which emotion is transpersonal. See Bamford 2019, 78 on emotional contagion.

[36] Insofar as self-suspicion is a sensibility that turns me against *features* of myself that may be more or less central to who I *genuinely* am, the sense of "self" employed here is extremely thin.

[37] Though Nietzsche does not use the term self-suspicion to describe the evaluative sensibility I explore above, he refers to such a sensibility with some frequency throughout his body of work. In *Daybreak,* he explains how customary morality inspires one to become "more distrustful [*misstrauischer*] of all excessive well-being" (D 18), including one's own (given that this suspicion results in "self-chosen torture" (ibid)). In BGE, his treatment of self-suspicion (or self-mistrust) as a socioculturally produced evaluative sensibility is pronounced. In one aphorism, he describes how, due to conventional morality, "everything that elevates the individual above the herd… is henceforth called *evil;* and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the *mediocrity* of desires attains moral designations and honors. Eventually… every severity, even in justice, begins to disturb the conscience; any high and hard nobility and self-reliance is almost felt to be an insult and arouses mistrust [*erweckt Misstrauen*]" (201). Later, he refers to "the internal *mistrust* [*das innerliche* Misstrauen] which is the sediment in the hearts of all dependent men and herd animals" (206) and claims that those who assimilate conventional, "slavish" morality are "skeptical and suspicious, *subtly* suspicious, of all the 'good' that is honored [in the virtues of the powerful]" (260). Throughout the *Genealogy,* he describes how shame, as an emotional response to features of oneself inspired by one's belonging to a society or ideological community, results in a mistrust of oneself and one's instincts (GM II:7; GM III:9; GM III:14). (Note that he refers to D 18 and BGE 260 in GM III:9). In TI, he describes how the criminal's society inculcates in him a "Chandala feeling" involving suspicion [*Verdacht*] of himself ("Skirmishes" 45); in *The Antichrist,* he describes how assimilating beliefs endemic to a Christian sociocultural context "arouses mistrust

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That the sociocultural production of aversive affects may lead to the development of self-suspicion (given dominant beliefs and norms of a given society that are in tension with one's own instincts, desires, and values) is suggested by the following, taken together:

1. My emotional experiences are fundamentally evaluative: that is, they involve evaluative orientations or assessments of their intentional objects. Nietzsche understands emotional experiences broadly as assessing their intentional objects positively or negatively (depending on whether their valence is broadly positive or negative).

2. The motivational force of an affect (*qua* inclination or disinclination) is determined by its evaluative orientation. If an emotional experience involves a positive evaluation of its intentional object (via its positive valence), I will feel inclined towards that intentional object. If an emotional experience involves a negative evaluation of its intentional object (via its negative valence), I will feel disinclined towards that intentional object.

3. The motivational force of an emotion determines its *tended* behavioral outcome. If I am positively inclined towards particular actions, desires, or instincts, I become more likely to manifest those actions, desires, and instincts. If I am disinclined towards particular actions, desires, or instincts, I become less likely to manifest those actions, desires, and instincts.

4. Sometimes, the intentional objects provoking my emotional experiences are my own actions, desires, or instincts. That is, I sometimes experience emotions in response to certain of my actions and/or features of myself.

5. Pre-reflectively—that is, prior to any conscious reflection on my emotional experience— I tend to experience my emotional responses as *appropriate*, or *merited by* the intentional object/s I encounter. (Otherwise put, I experience my emotional responses as *fitting*.)

[*Misstrauen*]" in "everything natural in the instincts,— everything beneficial and life-enhancing in the instincts" (43). Finally, in his late unpublished notes, he argues that "[m]an, imprisoned in an iron cage of errors became a caricature of man, sick, wretched, ill-disposed toward himself, full of hatred for the impulses of life, full of mistrust [*voller Misstrauen*] of all that is beautiful and happy in life" (KSA 13:15[73]).

6. Thus, when I experience broadly positive/approbatory or negative/disapprobatory emotions in response to my own actions, desires, or instincts, I pre-reflectively experience those emotoins as *merited* by these things: that is, I encounter my actions, desires, or instincts as worthy of the emotional experiences they provoke.

7. Yet my emotional experiences are often surreptitiously mediated by ideas, values, and norms typical of the sociocultural milieu I inhabit (that is to say, "customary" beliefs and values). In particular, the intensity and valence of my emotional experience – its emotional coloring – is, in part, a function of ideas, beliefs, and norms I assimilate in virtue of my sociocultural milieu.

According to Nietzsche, self-suspicion develops when mistrust of my own instincts, desires, and aims takes hold of my psychic life (GM II:16). In turn, the development of self-suspicion tends to stifle the outward expression of those instincts (and turn me away from those aims). By connecting the elements outlined above, we can see how this occurs via my emotional experiences and their implicit (allegedly merited) evaluations.

First, the emotional responses I experience in relation to certain of my actions, desires, or instincts have broadly positive or negative valences. As mentioned above, the broadly positive emotions I experience will incline me towards those actions or excite the development or expression of certain desires or instincts, while the broadly negative emotions I experience will disincline me towards those actions or inhibit the development or expression of certain desires or instincts. Additionally, my emotions have the motivational force and tended behavioral outcomes they do in relation to their intentional objects because they are experienced as merited responses to those objects. If I experience a disapprobatory emotion in response to one of my desires, that is, I experience that emotion as appropriate – which is to say that I encounter that desire as bad or undesirable *in itself.*

Since I generally experience my emotions as appropriate or fitting (i.e. merited by their intentional objects), when I experience broadly negative or disapprobatory emotions towards certain of my extant instincts, desires, aims, or values (as a function of the sociocultural milieu to which I belong), I will experience them as justified negative evaluations of these features of myself. The self-suspicion that develops from habitually experiencing such affective aversions commonly functions to suppress these instincts, desires, aims, and values. (At the very least, as mentioned above, it leads me to second-guess them.)

For Nietzsche, the sensibility of self-suspicion is not problematic in itself; it is simply a feature of social existence, a typical result of one's habitual experience of negative, socially produced emotions in response to certain features of oneself. Much like Aaron Ridley's "bad conscience in its 'raw state'" (134), it is simply part of being a willing, feeling being who belongs to a society and occasionally experiences emotions that conflict with that society's norms. Nor is the mistrust of oneself (or features of oneself) that constitutes self-suspicion necessarily worthy of lament. After all, in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of "mistrust, especially towards our 'first impulses'" for projects of self-cultivation (GM III:20). Indeed, in cases where the socially produced, habitual mistrust of certain of my extant instincts, desires, aims, and values pushes me to change in a favorable way (such that my unique form of power is expanded [GS 349], for example, or the "social structure of [my] drives and affects" [BGE 12] newly unified behind a strengthened drive [KSA 13:14 (157; 219)]), self-suspicion can even be advantageous, a positive transformative force.

As a transformative force, however, Nietzsche thinks self-suspicion has serious risks. First, if left unchecked by critical reflection, this sensibility of self-suspicion – as an involuntary emotional manifestation of the "herd instinct" – will leave me in a position of unwitting, servile obedience to the "herd" rather than self-command (BGE 199). Otherwise put, self-suspicion can undermine my "will to self-determination, to evaluating on [my] own account, [my] will to *free* will" (HH P 3). After all, because I do not typically notice the role that my society plays in producing the emotions I experience (via my assimilation of those customary ideas and values available to me in virtue of my sociocultural context), when I assess my instincts, desires, aims or values negatively at the emotional level, I experience this as a justified *self*-evaluation. It is easy for me to miss that this emotional evaluation is produced in part by forces from without (and seems merited just in virtue of the phenomenology of emotional warrant).[38] Unfortunately, without honest, critical reflection on these automatic affective self-assessments (involving a recognition of their origin) and subsequent deliberate endorsement of them, I am prevented from truly "evaluating on [my] own account" (HH P 3), prevented from attaining this necessary condition of my own self-determination.

Additionally, Nietzsche believes that an individual only counts as a genuine agent (with actions properly their own rather than mere behaviors) – and her affective assessments only count as values proper – if learning more about the origins of her behaviors and affective assessments would not

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[38] We see this in the case of the sick nobles who, after becoming "ashamed of their happiness", exclaim "'It's a disgrace to be happy!'" (GM III:14). Rather than reflecting and recognizing that the negative valuation of "their happiness" has its origin in the values of miserable others "shov[ed]" on to [their] conscience", they understand the negative evaluation present in their emotional experience as merited by that experience's intentional object: happiness itself.

undermine her approval of them (or lead to disapproval).[39] Importantly, however, he also thinks that becoming aware of self-suspicion as the source of my stifled instincts and the motive behind certain of my behaviors will often undermine this approval. Otherwise put, Nietzsche believes I will typically find it troubling that certain of my aims, instincts, and desires are stifled or called into question just in virtue of a socially produced evaluative sensibility that makes me suspicious of non-conforming features of myself. That is, my unknowing, unreflective acceptance of the particular negative self-assessments I experience (and the behaviors motivated by them) is likely to be undermined by a more thorough account of their contingent, sociocultural origins. The danger of self-suspicion here is that, under its influence, I become likely to form desires, adopt values, and pursue actions that I would disavow if their origins (in habitual, socially produced emotional self-aversions) were revealed to me.

Finally, Nietzsche believes that there is a particularly insidious result to which self-suspicion can lead. Self-suspicion becomes dangerous when that mistrust of certain features of oneself engendered by self-suspicion turns one against 1) instincts and drives the expression of which are central to one's empowerment; 2) desires and aims the pursuit of which offer opportunities for the expression of one's "most lively" instincts and drives; 3) emotions that facilitate the expression of those drives and instincts central to one's empowerment; and 4) values the adoption of which promotes and increases one's expression of power – in short, when a sensibility of self-suspicion turns into a self-*negating* conscience.[40] We find an example of this in Nietzsche's criminal type from *Twilight of the Idols*. Nietzsche describes him thusly:

> The criminal type is the type of the strong human being under unfavorable conditions, a strong human being who has been made sick. He lacks the wilderness, a certain freer and more dangerous nature and form of existence, in which everything that is a weapon and a defense in the instincts of the strong has a right to be. *His virtues are banned by society; the most lively drives he was born with have been entangled right away with depressing emotions, with suspicion, fear, dishonor. But this is virtually the recipe for physiological degeneration.* Anyone who has to do in secret what he can do best, what he would most like to do—with drawn-out suspense, caution, slyness—becomes anemic. *And since he always reaps only danger, persecution, and disaster from his instincts, even his feelings*

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[39] Katsafanas 2016, 132, 192. Katsafanas describes learning more about the origins of one's behaviors as gaining "knowledge of the drives and affects that figure [into their] etiology" (193).

[40] The sense of "self" used in "self-negating conscience" is more robust than that used in "self-suspicion." The self-negating conscience does not merely involve turning against more or less central features of oneself; it involves turning against those features of oneself that are most central to one's flourishing, those instincts, desires, aims, and values most central to one's empowerment. Note also here that I am understanding power as growth in one's abilities over time (Dunkle 2020).

turn against these instincts—he feels they are fatal. It is society, our tame, mediocre, castrated society, in which a natural human being, who comes from the mountains or from seafaring adventures, necessarily degenerates into a criminal. Or almost necessarily: for there are cases where such a person proves to be stronger than the society—the Corsican Napoleon is the most famous case… Let us generalize the case of the criminal: let us think of natures who, for some reason, are deprived of public approval, who know that they are not perceived as beneficial, as useful—that chandala feeling of not counting as an equal, but of being excluded, unworthy, a source of impurity. All such natures have a subterranean tint to their thoughts and deeds; with them, everything turns paler than with those on whose existence daylight shines. …I draw your attention to the fact that even today, under the mildest ethical regime that has ever held sway on earth, or at least in Europe, every deviation, every long, all too long stay underneath, every unusual, untransparent form of existence approaches that type which is perfected in the criminal. All renewers of the spirit bear the sallow and fatalistic sign of the chandala on their forehead sometime: not because they are thus perceived, but because they themselves feel the terrible gap that separates them from everything that is conventional and honored. [emphasis mine] (TI "Skirmishes" 45)

Here, we see that the criminal's "most lively drives… [are] entangled right away with depressing emotions" as a result of the social stigmatization of her desires, interests, and values. Such an individual – that "criminal type" – is a "strong human being under unfavorable conditions, a strong human being who has been made sick" from being "deprived of public approval", who senses that "[she is] not perceived of as beneficial, as useful" by the sociocultural milieu to which she belongs. As Nietzsche puts it, such an individual "feel[s] the terrible gap that separates [her] from everything that is conventional and honored"; this leads her to experience emotions of "suspicion, fear, [and] dishonor." Such aversive affects are experienced by the criminal herself as merited by her nature (her "most lively" drives) and values (her "virtues"); given their negative valence, they are experienced as indictments of her nature and values. This indictment leads to disempowerment, weakness, and illness.

In this example, then, we see how the emotional coloring of the criminal's emotional experience (and thus, her encounter with her nature and values as intentional objects) results from a complex interaction between her psychophysiological constitution – that individual as the complex of drives she is – and the sociocultural context she inhabits. In this selection from *Twilight of the Idols,* we find a clear picture of how Nietzsche believes one's society might function to mediate, manipulate, and regulate one's emotional experience, nudging the individual towards certain (allegedly appropriate)

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emotional responses and away from other (allegedly inappropriate) emotional responses, with the result that desires, instincts, and behaviors incongruous with sociocultural norms but central to one's own unique form of power are stifled. Otherwise put, the more one is nudged towards socioculturally "appropriate" responses and evaluations that are at odds with one's own "most lively" desires and instincts – in Nietzschean terms, those desires and instincts that constitute one's own unique form of power – the more likely one becomes to develop a self-negating conscience and to experience a psychophysiological degeneration that makes one's existence paler.

Nietzsche's example of the criminal type – a type in Nietzsche whose aggressive, outlaw instincts and desires typically involve the domination and subordination of others (Z I "On the Pale Criminal"; GM II 12; BGE 201) – might seem an odd example to help illuminate the emotional dynamics of sexist oppression. Yet the basic structure of this example, as involving the pathologizing of an individual's most lively desires, instincts, and goals by her society, parallels the impacts of sexist oppression on a woman whose desires, instincts, and goals conflict with norms of femininity in a patriarchal context. Otherwise put, women whose most empowering desires, interests, and aims are incongruous with the cis-hetero norms of the patriarchal sociocultural context they inhabit find themselves made into "criminal types," who often cannot help but "feel the terrible gap that separate[] [them] from everything that is conventional and honored" ((TI "Skirmishes" 45). In short, in a cis-hetero patriarchy, being a certain kind of woman is criminalized.

A Nietzschean account of the internalization of sexist oppression
In this section, I argue that in virtue of being a woman who does not conform to sexist norms (understood as widely shared, socially-shaped ideals that communicate what women ought to be, especially as present in widespread sexist stereotyping) in a cis-hetero patriarchal society, one becomes more likely to develop a self-negating conscience, to be nudged away (via socially produced, aversive emotional responses to those desires, traits, and behaviors most central to one's empowerment) from those aspects of oneself incongruous with typical ideals (from one's sociocultural milieu or ideological community) of womanhood and femininity. Additionally, I argue that the Nietzschean account of affectivity I sketch above offers a set of conceptual tools for analyzing how this occurs. Below, I discuss how this happens as a function of sexist stereotyping (as a form of norm enforcement).

Although all individuals in a patriarchal society are exposed to certain widespread norms of womanhood – those "controlling images" analyzed by Patricia Hill Collins[41] – these norms and images uniquely impact the emotional lives and self-assessments of certain "types" of women in such a way that the development of a self-negating conscience is made more likely.[42] Specifically, women whose desires and behaviors seem to deviate from norms of femininity are uniquely at-risk for the development of a self-negating evaluative sensibility, given the aversive emotional responses they are likely to experience as a result of an incongruity between their society's gendered expectations of them and those desires and behaviors central to their well-being and empowerment. In cases where these desires, instincts, and behaviors do not conform to social expectations, one tends to experience a host of emotions, such as "suspicion, fear, and dishonor" (TI "Skirmishes" 45) (as a function of one's assimilating beliefs and norms from her sociocultural milieu) that harm the individual who experiences them by disinclining her against her own desires, instincts, and behaviors.

In a patriarchy in which the historical domination of men and subordination of woman occurs in part via gendered norm enforcement as the involuntary exposure to a variety of sexist beliefs and norms, women are regularly exposed to beliefs and norms about what it means to be a woman that might impel them to second-guess or stifle certain of their instincts, behaviors, and goals, if those instincts, behaviors, and goals are incongruous with norms of femininity. More specifically, a woman who does not conform to gendered social norms will become more likely to experience emotions— produced as one (typically unwittingly) assimilates sexist ideas or values from one's sociocultural milieu or ideological community—that lead her to assess her desires, instincts, and behaviors incongruous with sociocultural gender norms negatively. The development of a self-negating conscience – the denial, devaluation, and suppression of those instincts requisite for one's empowerment – is a tended result of this emotional dynamic. In this kind of case, a woman typically develops an aversion to herself or her instincts via the mere assimilation of sexist ideas or values, much in the way Nietzsche's criminal does. Simply put, one's exposure to beliefs about how women *are* (such as gender essentialist beliefs) and norms that fix standards for how women *ought to be* has the power to shape one's emotional life. As Nietzsche indicates, however, this has transformative effects: these emotional impacts potentially shape what I am motivated to do (or to avoid doing) and can ultimately shape who I become. In cases

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[41] 1991, 266.

[42] Note that these widespread beliefs and norms vary not only along the axis of gender, but along the axes of race, class, and more. For example, those emotions, desires, and behaviors deemed "feminine" by one's sociocultural milieu will also frequently vary along lines of race, class, and more.

where I develop a self-negating conscience as a result of sexist beliefs and norms, what I do and who I become prevents my empowerment and flourishing.

An example should prove illuminating here. In those patriarchal societies with sexist stereotyping such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, women are often expected (both by men and other women) to be nurturing caregivers. This expectation is, by and large, a result of stereotypical and sexist representations that depict men and women as having "natural differences":[43] specifically, women are depicted as "naturally" more submissive and passive, with talents in domestic work including caregiving. Now take the example of a woman who manifests certain desires, character traits, and behaviors and inhabits a social role (expressive of her drives) that do not accord with stereotypical gender norms. Imagine, for example, an ambitious college professor and scholar whose "most lively" drive, a drive central to her empowerment, is the drive to knowledge. She has a personality that is commanding, blunt, and straightforward, and she is protective of her time, so she does not stay on campus beyond her set office hours, even when students ask her to do so. In a patriarchal society with sexist stereotypes, a woman who manifests the abovementioned features – a drive to knowledge; an ambitious, blunt, and commanding personality; a powerful and authoritative social role; and self-preserving behaviors – is liable to be suspect or worse: that is, these features, as intentional objects, may seem to warrant suspicion, disapprobation, and disdain.

According to the account I offer above, through (her own and others') exposure to sexist stereotyping, her patriarchal sociocultural milieu will encourage her to experience emotions that incline her against (or at least have her "second-guess") these features of herself. Remember from above Nietzsche's description of the way in which a cruel person in a society dominated by the morality of compassion (*Mitleids-Moral*) becomes likely to experience certain of her emotional responses – perhaps, joy in cruelty – as inappropriate, not fitting to the intentional object.[44] Nietzsche claims that this happens over time, as a function of being exposed to beliefs and norms that positively value compassion. In this same way, a woman in a patriarchal society dominated by sexist stereotyping might come to experience certain of her initial emotional responses as inappropriate or unfitting. Perhaps, for example, the woman above is proud of her ability to protect her time even when her students ask

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[43] Manne 2019, 88.
[44] Again, my claim here is not that such an individual experiences the emotion as morally inappropriate, but as unfitting, as inaccurately represent the evaluative features of the object in question (here, it might be a cruel action or a cruel emotion). Nietzsche's use of *Mitleids-Moral* (GM Preface 5,6; TI "Skirmishes" 37) follows Schopenhauer's use of the same term but is used by him more broadly: to refer to the modern Christian system of value dominating Europe in the late 19th-century. This system of value, of course, positively assesses compassion.

her to stay past her office hours. In virtue of her being exposed to 1) stereotypical beliefs about women's capacity for nurturing and 2) norms of femininity that lead to expectations of availability,[45] however, this woman might be nudged to adopt a more fitting, appropriate emotional response (by society's lights): these features of herself might slowly begin to provoke wariness or unease. It is not inconceivable that she will be motivated to change these empowering yet non-conforming features of herself or begin slowly (and not necessarily consciously) to adopt values, form desires, and pursue actions that she would disavow if their origin was revealed to her.

The woman in the above example will tend to experience emotions first-personally that either make her averse to a variety of instincts and aims central to her flourishing or transform her in ways she would renounce (if made aware of the origins of that transformation), but she will also experience the potentially transformative emotional evaluations of others. Specifically, she will be likely to encounter patterns of aversive emotional responses (perhaps suspicion, disapprobation, and disdain) from others who believe that such emotions are merited: that is, that they are fitting aversive responses to features which, when manifest by a woman, are negative.[46] Perhaps colleagues dislike her straightforward, assertive personality and find her "untrustworthy."[47] Perhaps they expect her to stay later for the sake of her students or to do other forms of service work; perhaps they bristle and blame her when she does not, experiencing her failure to stay or serve as a deficit of care.[48] Perhaps students write in evaluative comments that she is "cold," "mean," "nasty," and "unfair,"[49] though her behaviors in the classroom are no different than her male colleagues. Perhaps because they expect her "to be available outside of class and care about students' personal lives,"[50] her students react poorly when she protects her time: they consider her "insufficiently available,"[51] and understand their negative emotions about her lack of availability as warranted. Perhaps, finally, she notices that she is cited significantly less than her male peers in the field.[52]

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[45] Bennett 1982, 177.
[46] See El-Alayli et. al (2018), who note that "descriptive stereotypes also align with people's prescriptive stereotypes regarding how women and men should behave (Barreto et al. 2009), resulting in negative impressions being formed of those who violate gender expectations (Connell 1995; Sibley and Wilson 2004)."
[47] See Ridgeway (2001), who notes that "when women in mixed-sex groups present their ideas in an assertive or self-directed style, they are disliked or perceived as untrustworthy and achieve less influence over men compared to similarly acting men or less assertive women" (648-9).
[48] Misra et. al (2011).
[49] Manne 2019, 275.
[50] El-Alayli 2018, describing research from Burns-Glover and Veith 1995.
[51] Bennett 1982, 177.
[52] As per Mitchell et. al (2013), who notes that "articles published by women are significantly less likely to be cited than articles written by men."

The more this woman experiences certain aversive affects in relation to aspects of herself and encounters the aversive emotional responses of others, the more likely she is, Nietzsche thinks, to internalize these emotional responses. This leads her not only to experience disapprobatory emotions in response to aspects of herself; it leads her to experience these emotions as appropriate or fitting reactions to those aspects. Though Nietzsche believes "there are cases where such a person proves to be stronger than the society" (TI "Skirmishes" 45), he understands these cases as exceedingly rare. The more she experiences suspicion, disapprobation, and disdain towards herself, then, the more this woman turns away from empowering features of herself that she previously valued. Perhaps her straightforward, commanding nature becomes less appealing to her and she tries to become warmer, more acquiescing, in ways that please her students and colleagues, ultimately making her life more frictionless.[53] Perhaps she is motivated to act in more nurturing ways, more selflessly, at her own expense; we can imagine that she might stay just a bit past her office hours, and just when students *really* seem to need the help. Perhaps as a function of the lack of citation, she experiences "imposter syndrome," becoming suspicious about her own expertise, her competence, and her ability to contribute substantively to her field.[54] In such a case, the initial empowering impulses and drives she manifested, though still present, become dimmed, inhibited, less actively expressed. Ultimately, she turns against her own desires and instincts at the very level of her affectivity. Those formerly most vigorous desires and instincts become repressed and she no longer is the strong-willed, powerful person that she was.

Suppose this woman unthinkingly accepts her personal transformation and goes about her life. According to Nietzsche, if she should come at a later time to trace the origins of this personal transformation back to a socially produced, self-negating conscience, she would likely be troubled. If that were so, any unreflective acceptance of who she has become (and the process that facilitated her personal transformation) would be undermined; her lack of agency in her own transformation would then be starkly revealed. In a case like this, her emotional revolt against herself – a byproduct of her assimilating beliefs and norms hostile to her mode of existence – will have resulted both in the development of a self-negating conscience and in a fragmentation that results in a loss of agency.[55]

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[53] As El-Alayli et. al (2018) indicate: "In order to please students, female professors must walk a line between warmth and agency, a fine balance not as strictly required of male professors (Basow 1998; Cuddy et al. 2004)."
[54] Interestingly for my case here, Clance and Ames (1978) find that "later introjection of societal sex-role stereotyping appear[s] to contribute significantly to the development of the impostor phenomenon" (241).
[55] Nietzsche would likely insist that such a transformation happens without one's being aware of it.

A few final thoughts

At this point, I wish to add a few remarks and caveats to my account. In the above section, I both analyze the emotional dynamics of sexist oppression and describe the tended results of these dynamics. Importantly, however, cases with end-results like the one I describe just above should be understood as "worst-case scenarios." In such "worst-case scenarios," women's emotional lives are manipulated and regulated to such an extent by their sexist, patriarchal societies that they come to devalue their own most empowering instincts and desires, developing a self-negating conscience and losing agency. These cases are the most extreme examples of the ways in which the emotional dynamics of sexist oppression can harm certain women. But there are other, subtler cases to consider that indicate just how insidious the emotional damages of sexist oppression can be.

For example, imagine a woman who becomes aware of a felt pressure to conform her desires, instincts, and behaviors to norms of femininity present in her patriarchal society. Imagine she recognizes that this pressure is the result of certain socially produced emotional responses she experiences and decides that she wants to actively resist that pressure, affirming herself and her instincts in the process. This drive to resist will involve not only striving to overthrow dominant beliefs and norms and subvert their emotional influence; it will also require her to reflect constantly on her own emotional responses, rooting out those emotional responses constituted in part by sexist ideas and values and attempting to abide by those emotional responses that affirm those instincts and values that lead to her empowerment. We can imagine that her constant effort and vigilance will be exhausting. For women in a patriarchal society who do not find their most empowering instincts, desires, and behaviors valued, yet still wish to affirm their modes of existence, such exhaustion is simply an existential hazard – and it is a hazard that others with different modes of existence can avoid, even within a patriarchal sociocultural milieu. Even if the emotional dynamics of sexist oppression in individual cases do not result in self-negation, then, such dynamics are still likely to harm women whose most empowering desires, instincts, and actions are incongruous to those accepted by her sociocultural milieu. At the very least, they have the potential to sap energy from such women's attempts to both affirm themselves and to create new and liberating worlds.

I am not arguing, then, that all women in a patriarchal society (with non-conforming empowering desires, instincts, and behaviors) will develop a self-negating conscience, become disassociated from their values and goals, and ultimately lose the urgent need to create a sociocultural milieu more amenable to their existence. After all, Nietzsche argues that "there are cases where [the criminal type] proves to be stronger than the society" (TI "Skirmishes" 45). My claim is much more

modest, though still troubling: I argue here that being a certain type of woman in a patriarchy is an existential hazard of sorts, a hazard one encounters simply in virtue of being oneself in a context that is hostile (be it implicitly or explicitly) to who one is. Though this is not a new insight for anyone even mildly familiar with feminist thought, my Nietzschean account of the specifically *emotional* obstacles to one's self-actualization – the way in which a patriarchal sociocultural milieu might infiltrate one's psychological life by generating emotional responses that turn *oneself* against one's own most lively desires, interests, and goals – does something important. Namely, it fleshes out a critical emotional mechanism of "psychological oppression," the internalization of oppression as described by Sandra Bartky:[56]

> To be psychologically oppressed is to be weighed down in your mind; it is to have a harsh dominion exercised over your self-esteem. The psychologically oppressed become their own oppressors; they come to exercise harsh dominion over their own self-esteem. Differently put, psychological oppression can be regarded as the "internalization of intimations of inferiority."[57]

In short, one way in which one might exercise "harsh dominion over [one's] own self-esteem" is via the unwitting assimilation of ideas, beliefs, values, and norms, an assimilation that potentially generates self-harming, aversive emotional responses.

Bartky argues that psychological oppression both 1) fragments (or splits) the self and 2) results in "mystification, [or] the systematic obscuring of both the reality and agencies of psychological oppression so that its intended effect, the depreciated self, is lived out as destiny, guilt, or neurosis."[58] My account supplements that of Bartky by fleshing out the emotional dimension of these two features. First, what Bartky describes as the fragmentation of the self results in part from the fragmentation of one's emotional life, into those emotional responses that seem to affirm one's "true" self (or those instincts and desires central to one's empowerment) and those that seem to devalue it. As one becomes fragmented in this way, it gets more and more difficult to discern which self is the "true" self to affirm. Additionally, the emotional dynamics of sexist oppression described above are a key element of mystification as a process that makes the source of one's psychological oppression, as well as its reality, difficult to discern. After all, a key feature of Nietzsche's account of affectivity as transpersonal is that, though the emotional coloring of my emotional responses (their quality and valence) are informed by

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[56] Bartky's account is inspired by Franz Fanon's account from *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and a 1970 paper by Joyce Mitchell Cook).

[57] Bartky 1990, 22; citation to Cook, 1970.

[58] Bartky 1990, 23.

the sociocultural milieux or ideological communities to which I belong, I experience them as my own. When I experience disapprobatory emotional responses in relation to features of myself (perhaps those desires, instincts, or actions that are incongruous to norms of femininity) I tend to understand these disapprobatory emotions and the negative evaluations they carry with them as my own. According to Nietzsche, however, they do not *merely* originate from my psychophysiological constitution; in believing them to do so, the role my sociocultural milieu or ideological community played in producing them is obscured and my agency is threatened.

Finally, one might ask: Why the focus on women here? Don't we see similar emotional dynamics at work in cases where men possess desires and manifest behaviors outside of the cis-hetero norm of masculinity, for example, in cases of "toxic masculinity?"[59] In response, I say: yes, we do. Indeed, according to the Nietzschean account I sketch here, men within a patriarchal society dominated by sexist beliefs and norms about femininity whose desires, instincts, and actions appear congruous with stereotypically feminine ones would become more likely to internalize sexist beliefs and norms, and thus more likely to experience harmful emotions generated in part by their sociocultural context. But it is especially important to notice that "toxic masculinity" and its emotional impacts are a result of the *same* sexist, patriarchal context that functions (and has historically functioned) first and foremost to subordinate women and restrict their power, in part by limiting the desires, instincts, behaviors, and roles it deems appropriate for a woman to manifest. Patriarchal sociocultural milieux involve the systemic subordination and devaluation of women; historically, these milieux have disproportionately harmed women, and they continue to disproportionately harm women today. Thus, though men might also suffer negative emotional impacts, the brunt of the emotional burden of sexism is borne by women— especially women who aspire to positions of power, straightforwardly communicate their desires and ambitions, and refuse to regulate their desires and behaviors.

In his work, Nietzsche asks his reader to imagine a world in which those values we customarily adopt are called into question, a world in which customary norms and understandings of moral appropriateness are disrupted. Such a "revaluation of values" is sorely needed, Nietzsche argues, because the values we have so far are profoundly life-denying: they diminish those who adopt them; though they benefit a particular kind of society, they tend to harm and disempower the individual. Systems of traditional morality idealize selflessness (GM II 18); it should be unsurprising that the

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[59] See, for example, the 2018 APA Guidelines for Psychological with Boys and Men.
https://www.apa.org/about/policy/boys-men-practice-guidelines.pdf

assimilation of such systems of morality via social norms and values ultimately leads to the loss of oneself. Though Nietzsche was far from interested in subverting patriarchal norms and values, I suggest that there are structural similarities between Nietzsche's critique of certain moral systems (and notions of emotional appropriateness as fittingness that accompany those worldviews) and the critique of patriarchy implied by my account above. The more these structural similarities come into view, the easier it becomes to imagine a world "beyond good and evil" as a world beyond patriarchal norms and values.[60]

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[60] Not to mention a world beyond nationalisms and white supremacy.

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