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Knowledge as Masculine Heroism or Embodied Perception: Knowledge, Will, and Desire in Nietzsche

CYNTHIA KAUFMAN

Two distinct doctrines of the will operate in Nietzsche. On one, each person has a will that grows out of their engagement with life. This view can be the basis for a feminist epistemology. On the other, the will must be stimulated through the creation of unattainable goals and games of seduction. This view of the will is misogynist, as it posits a self that must constitute for itself a dominated and silenced other.

Thoughts are the shadows of our feelings—
always darker, emptier, and simpler.
Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*[1]

Given the special venom, as well as the sheer quantity, of Nietzsche's insulting comments about women, it is not surprising that for a long time, the idea of any feminist appropriation of his work has been considered an outrageous project. In recent years, the opposite has become a commonplace. Nietzsche has come to be seen as one of the founding figures in feminist epistemology (Patton 1993; Burgard 1994). In this paper, I want to investigate one aspect of the relationship between Nietzsche's misogynist views and his philosophical positions. I shall argue that two distinct doctrines of the will operate in Nietzsche—one misogynist, the other not—and that these doctrines of the will are related to different epistemological strategies in Nietzsche's work. The core of the difference in his epistemological strategies, I will argue, is to be found in the ways that Nietzsche conceives of the relationship between desire and knowledge.

Nietzsche's importance to feminist theory grows in large part from our ability to use him as an ally in challenging the dominant tendencies in the Western philosophical tradition. Central to his project is a critique of this tradition's

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notions of objectivity and rationality. As Genevieve Lloyd has argued in *The Man of Reason*, the view that reason is fundamentally defined by its opposition to emotion operates as a key ideological support for male domination (1984). Whatever his views of women, Nietzsche offers us a brilliant and thorough critique of the Western philosophical tradition, which is enough to make a serious reading of Nietzsche worthwhile for feminist theorists.

In everyday practice, women are often silenced by claims that their perceptions are irrational or that emotion clouds their thinking. Such claims often have a chilling effect on women's ability to articulate their concerns in ways that are socially recognized as significant. When the cultural system does not support women's concerns and insights, society as a whole does not address women's needs and interests. As feminists demolish the cultural practices that silence women through claims to a superior logic, rationality, or dispassionateness, more space opens for marginalized voices to be heard as legitimate. Nietzsche's theory that the best forms of knowledge grow out of socially mediated forms of embodied perception helps to lay the epistemological groundwork for more democratic and less misogynist cultural systems. His critique of the universalist and rationalist elements of Western culture help to deflate the power of hegemonic claims that are used to silence women.[2] Finally, an investigation of Nietzsche's own gendered blind spots and how they influence his epistemology can help to make visible some sexist strains in the Western worldview.

In his critique of Western epistemology, Nietzsche demolishes the pretensions of Western philosophy to universality and lays the groundwork for our ability to see how our dominant theories of knowledge reinforce power relations. Nietzsche shows how reason functions as a social practice that mediates consciousness of our experience in the world through socially constructed discourses of reason and how these discourses profoundly affect lived experience of our own being in the world. From a Nietzschean perspective, it still makes sense to speak of the validity of truth and reason, but the basis for that validity has shifted. If with Nietzsche, we reject the notion that reason has a transcendent nature it no longer makes sense to search for timeless and universal principles as the ground of reason's validity. For Nietzsche, the validity of a discourse of truth is based on its healthiness for the will.

In *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without Masks*, Ofelia Schutte argues that Nietzsche has two theories of the will to power, "In one case, power is used in the sense of domination, whereas in the other it is used in the sense of recurring energy" (1984, 76). Schutte argues that the notion of the will to power as domination is ultimately nihilistic because it is based on a dualism of higher and lower. She uses Nietzsche's own critique of the dualism of good and evil to point out that Nietzsche is caught up in the same life-denying practice that he criticizes. "Nietzsche's counterproposals to democracy do not take him any farther along the road to a non-alienated, non-fragmented conception of

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human reality than the dualistic and reductionist structures of value that he himself opposed" (1984, 172). This paper takes off from Schutte's distinction between the two ways of understanding the will in Nietzsche and inquires further into the nature of the difference between them. While Schutte's analysis is helpful for clarifying the difference between the theories of the will, her analysis of the sources and implications of Nietzsche's dominating notion of power is less satisfying. Schutte argues that Nietzsche accepts unquestioningly Western culture's notions of authority as command. She does less to explore why Nietzsche does not question this, and she doesn't explore how the different theories of the will, when taken separately, lead to clearly distinguishable epistemological theories.

Because Nietzsche has two contradictory theories of the will, he has two different theories of the kinds of epistemological practices that are healthy for the will. One view is that discourses of reason grow out of human beings' willing practices. Each person has a will that grows out of their engagement with life. The will has a natural liveliness to it that only becomes nihilistic when it is not allowed expression. These willing practices are mediated through the social practice of language. While this mediation through language brings a necessary social element into the articulation of the will, there is no reason that a range of truths cannot be articulated within a linguistic system. Thus with this view, we can imagine a multiplicity of epistemological practices growing out of the linguistic articulation of people's varied experiences.

The other view is that the will has an inherent tendency to atrophy. The will gains its vitality through sublimation and negation. The self's tendency toward diffusion, and hence, nihilism can only be overcome by stimulating the will through the creation of unattainable goals and the sublimation of desire through games of seduction. By constituting an other as a mirror, the self gains stability. Any genuine alterity threatens the self, which is constituted through this strategy. The self is hostile to epistemological pluralism and must constitute for itself a dominated and silenced other.

Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power remains ambiguous between these two concepts of will. He often writes as if the will to power means the will to the expression of the will. In other places, it seems clear that the will to power means the will to dominate. Given the history of Nietzsche interpretation, it is not surprising that the will to power has mostly been read as the will to dominate (Thomas 1983; Helm 1995).[3] Conservative and fascist thinkers have used Nietzsche, beginning with the edition of *The Will to Power* prepared by his sister, Elizabeth Förster Nietzsche, a fascist (Kaufmann 1968).[4] While Nietzsche himself clearly held elitist views, only one of his doctrines of the will supports these views (Warren 1988).[5]

While Nietzsche laid the groundwork for a social epistemology that is useful for questioning hegemonic operations of power, he was not interested in

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challenging certain forms of hegemony. In order to use his epistemology for a feminist project, we must be careful to notice Nietzsche's own hegemonic operations. I shall argue that Nietzsche's belief that a form of asceticism must make the will heroic idealizes a masculine relation to autonomy and, hence, serves the hegemonic function of preventing women's interests from being able to be articulated in legitimate discourse.

1: Knowledge As Embodied Perception

"Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species could not live" (Nietzsche 1968a, 272). What could Nietzsche mean by such an obviously self-contradictory statement? If Nietzsche is really denying the possibility of truth, how can he call anything an error? This paradoxical way of approaching the question of truth is present throughout Nietzsche's work (Clark 1990). It is possible to use this paradoxical statement to reject the very possibility of any epistemology or to reject Nietzsche's view by arguing that it is incoherent (Lyotard 1985; Habermas 1986).[6] A third way of reading the aphorism may prove more fruitful. Nietzsche is asking us to look at discourses of truth in a new way. He wants to show that the discourses do not have the metaphysical validity that traditionally have been granted to them. Discourses of truth are, however, necessary to life, and therefore, not to be totally rejected (Stegmaier 1985, 69-95).[7] For Nietzsche, the question of truth centers on the social function of truth and how we can change the way we use discourses of truth to better serve human needs.

Nietzsche sees the nihilism of Western civilization as intimately related to the attempt to come up with a final truth (Simon 1989, 257). If we believe that truth is something reachable, we negate the validity of our own thinking being in the world. We posit a possible end to our intellectual living and we fundamentally misperceive what we are doing when we engage in discourses of truth. Our acting in the world requires that we hold things as true. For this reason, discourses of truth are necessary. But because they can never be given a solid grounding, that is, can never be freed of at least some presuppositions and assumptions, discourses of truth are never *true* in the metaphysical sense of the word.

Prior to any epistemological question for Nietzsche is the question of our goals in searching for truth. Nietzsche argues that science, with its underlying assumption of the desirability of knowledge, is not as antithetical to religion as it has traditionally seen itself. "This pair, science and the ascetic ideal, both rest on the same foundation—I have already indicated it: on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticized)" (Nietzsche 1969, 53). Or, in *The Gay Science*, he writes, "But you will have gathered what I am driving at, namely, that it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests—that even we seekers

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after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which is also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine" (Nietzsche 1974, 283; italics in original).

By questioning the value of truth, Nietzsche invites us to ask what sort of social role it plays. If the search for truth is not an end in itself, why do we engage in it, what interests does it serve and how might these interests be better served? Nietzsche's views on the interests served by different discourses of truth are both complex and contradictory. While Nietzsche argues for the value of viewing truth as perspectival, as growing out of the real life concerns of human beings, he also sees some value in the traditional philosophical view of reason as absolute, unitary, and hostile to the body. While the search for an absolute, perspective-free truth has nihilistic implications, (he sees perspective-free truth as a castration of the intellect) (1969, 119), he also thinks that it could serve a useful function. The creation of an unattainable goal leads to a heroism of the will, which he claims will lead to cultural greatness, if we can aim for this goal without simultaneously having its inherent hostility to lived experience lead to an atrophy of our wills. As I shall argue later, this connection between heroism and perspective-free truth is at the heart of Nietzsche's misogynist and hegemonic epistemological strategies.

2: Reason As A Hegemonic Social Practice

While truth is the sort of lie without which the human species cannot survive, different lies about truth structure human life in different ways. Nietzsche shows that the discourses of reason, or operations of truth, we engage in are inextricably bound up with the necessarily social practices of power and politics. Conceptualization takes place through the medium of language. Through language, we engage in a process of social fetishism. We experience the world as mediated through the categories that joint processes embedded in social practices create. This means that language is the site of the production of ideology (Warren 1988, 58). It is the place where individual experience and social understanding are the most intimately mediated.

Consciousness resides in the person and always bears the marks of that person's unique experience, but it also always is articulated through the conceptual frameworks of the larger linguistic group. "Words are acoustical signs for concepts; concepts, however, are more or less definite image signs for often recurring and associated sensations, for groups of sensations. To understand one another, it is not enough that one use the same words; one also has to use the same words for the same inner experiences; in the end one has to have one's experience in *common*" (Nietzsche 1966, 216; italics in original).

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In *The Gay Science* section 354, Nietzsche argues that consciousness, as the mirror of experience, grows out of the social need for communication: "The whole of life would be possible without at the same time seeing itself in a mirror: even now for that matter, by far the greatest portion of our life actually takes place without this mirror effect" (1974, 297). "Where need and distress have forced people for a long time to communicate and to understand each other at the same time quickly and subtly, the ultimate result is an excess of this strength and art of communication" (Nietzsche 1974, 298). "It was only as a social animal that human beings acquired self-consciousness" (Nietzsche 1974, 298).

> My idea is, as you see, that consciousness does not really belong to the individual existence of a person, but rather to their social or herd nature; that, as follows from this, it has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility. Consequently, given the best will in the world to understand ourselves as individually as possible, "to know ourselves," each of us will always succeed in becoming conscious only of what is not individual but "average." Our thoughts themselves are continually governed by the character of consciousness—by the "genius of the species" that commands it—at the same time outvoted [*majorisiert*] and translated back into the perspective of the herd. . . . This is the true phenomenalism and perspectivism. (Nietzsche 1974, 299)

Thus, Nietzsche's perspectivism does not claim that each of us has a unique perspective growing out of the sense we make of our own experiences. Rather, he argues that our consciousness of our own experiences is mediated through social processes. Knowledge develops on the basis of the already social phenomenon of consciousness. And systems of knowledge can develop to serve particular social interests. For example, the Christian denial of the body serves the interests of the priestly class. "We must count the ascetic priest as the predestined savior, shepherd, and advocate of the sick herd: only thus can we understand his tremendous historical mission. *Dominion over the suffering* is his kingdom, that is where his instinct directs him, here he possesses his distinctive art, his mastery, his kind of happiness" (Nietzsche 1969, 125-6; italics in original). Christian priests have a group interest in dominion over the suffering, in maintaining a group of slavish followers.

Similarly, Nietzsche argues that those in positions of power have been able to define terms in ways beneficial to themselves: "The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say this *is* 'this and this,' they seal every thing and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it" (1969, 26; italics in original). The power to name things

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is the power to construct the categories through which an entire linguistic group understands its experiences. In the case of the terms "good" and "evil," Nietzsche claims that "the judgement 'good' did not originate with those to whom 'goodness' was shown! Rather, it was 'the good' themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common and plebeian" (1969, 169). The concept of goodness did not arise out of utilitarianism or a dispassionate investigation of the nature of goodness; rather, it serves to enshrine the values that the powerful saw as distinguishing themselves from those they wanted to be distinguished from.

Here, Nietzsche shows linguistic practices to have profound hegemonic implications. Once a group defines a term like "good" that term serves the group's interests, until it is appropriated for another use, thereby challenging the hegemony. This is what Nietzsche argues happened with the slave revolt in morality. The term "good," which served the interests of the aristocrats, was appropriated by the Christians to enshrine another hegemonic interpretation of reality—the rule of the ascetic priest.

3: The Value Of Universal Forms Of Reason

For Nietzsche, then, knowledge is a social practice. Discourses of truth mediate both human interaction and the consciousness a person has of her/his experience. But how can we know the value of a discourse of truth if we reject any correspondence theory of truth? For Nietzsche the answer lies in his physiological pragmatism. We should accept a discourse of truth if acceptance of it leads to a healthy will, if it puts us in a relationship with the world such that healthy impulses are able to be expressed and generated. In section 110 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche makes a distinction between two kinds of knowledge, one based on direct interpretations of experience and one based on more abstract relations to experience. In this section he refers to these respectively as "life preserving errors" and "truth." The kind of truth he sees as fundamental errors are those judgments by which we make sense out of our sensuous experience. "Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny" (Nietzsche 1974, 169). The other form of truth aims at a higher level of universality; it sees knowledge as fundamentally dissociated from sense experience and sees rationality as autonomous. Nietzsche argues that the form of knowledge that posits itself as universal is the weakest form of knowledge. Its usefulness for life is anything but obvious.

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Nietzsche argues that in earlier phases of human history, the truths that oriented human action were always those based on false generalizations from experience. Since the time of the Eleatics, however, truth has become alienated from sense experience. The Eleatics developed a skepticism toward experience-based knowledge. By denying the perspectival nature of their own knowledge, they could present their way of looking at the world as valid for all. "[T]hey had to misapprehend the nature of the knower; they had to deny the role of the impulses in knowledge; and quite generally they had to conceive of reason as a completely free and spontaneous activity. They shut their eyes to the fact that they, too, had arrived at their propositions through opposition to the commonly accepted, or owing to a desire for tranquility, for sole possession, or for domination" (Nietzsche 1974, 169). This so called knowledge of the Eleatics is as much based on error as the experience-based knowledge that preceded it. The difference is that this knowledge presents itself as universally valid and, thus, has a heroic quality not available to its predecessor.

This heroism, though, requires a problematic relationship to sense experience. Like all forms of knowledge, it originates in sense experience as an interpretation that gives expression to a kind of desire, in this case a "desire for tranquility, for sole possession or for domination" (Nietzsche 1974, 169). It is a relationship to sense experience which posits itself as non-bodily, as transcendent. Thus, an internally contradictory and hostile relation to the body is initiated (Sloterdijk 1989, 67 and 83).[8]

Nietzsche argues that universalistic knowledge, with its requirements of consistency, has a tendency to declare other forms of knowing as illegitimate. Skepticism creates an unhealthy atmosphere for "basic errors." With the victory of universalistic knowledge in our culture, "The intellectual fight became an occupation, an attraction, a profession, a duty, something dignified—and eventually knowledge and the striving for the true found their place as a need among other needs" (Nietzsche 1974, 170). The struggle between experience-based and universalistic reason has developed a human interest in philosophical knowledge. "Thus knowledge became a piece of life itself, and hence a continually growing power—until eventually knowledge [universal knowledge] collided with those primeval basic errors [experience based knowledge]: both as life, both as power and both in the same human being" (Nietzsche 1974, 171).

Now in human beings, there is a fight between basic errors and the impulse for "truth." Nietzsche writes that these two forms of knowledge are locked in a struggle, the outcome of which will have profound consequences. He writes that the most important question this struggle raises is "To what extent can truth endure incorporation?" (1974, 171). Nietzsche asks if our universal discourses of knowledge can be brought into a vital relationship with the body, as are primordial errors.

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The relationship between truth and physicality, between reason and passion, is a central theme for Nietzsche, and his criterion for what counts as useful truth is bound up with the question of what sorts of epistemological practices are healthy for the body. The so called basic errors are much closer to the person's bodily needs than the great philosophic systems, because they grow out of the generalizations required to solve existential problems. Say, one encounters a dangerous animal. One survives successfully if one generalizes from this experience and identifies as the same another animal that poses a similar danger and if one is able to communicate this generalization to other people. This generalization is false in the sense that it misses the differences between the two animals, but is "true" in a pragmatic sense. This form of knowledge answers questions that grow out of everyday experience. By offering a network of meaning by which we can make sense out of the world of experience, this form of knowledge not only offers us a pragmatic orientation for our actions, but it also makes possible a practice that expresses our bodily desires.

Universalistic, or philosophical, knowledge on the other hand, bears a more complex relation to the body and experience than does the knowledge founded on basic errors. Even though both forms grow out of experience, the distinguishing feature of universalistic knowledge is that it denies this derivation. By positing itself as perspective-free, universalistic knowledge makes claims to a validity beyond its ability to make sense out of our experiences. This error is of a different order than the errors inherent in basic knowledge. Most significant for Nietzsche is that universalism must deny the relationship between the body and knowledge. By denying that the source of consciousness resides in the senses, a hostile relation between mind and body is set up in which the growth of knowledge leads to an increased desecration of the body.

Given Nietzsche's view that in the modern West we live with two fundamentally different sources of knowledge, one that expresses a positive relation to sense experience and another that expresses a hostile one, why does Nietzsche claim that we need to incorporate universalistic knowledge? What does the knowledge founded on "basic errors" lack that the more philosophic form has?

In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche discusses the complex role that philosophical systems, such as Platonism, have played in history: "The dogmatist's philosophy was, let us hope, only a promise across millennia—as astrology was in still earlier times when perhaps more work, money, acuteness, and patience were lavished in its service than for any real science so far: to astrology and its "super-terrestrial" claims we owe the grand style of architecture in Asia and Egypt. It seems that all great things first have to bestride the earth in monstrous and frightening masks in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands: dogmatic philosophy was such a mask; for example, the Vedanta doctrine in Asia and Platonism in Europe"

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(1966, 2-3). Platonism, through its rejection of the perspectival nature of truth, has created a great tension in the human soul. The fight against Platonism, and its popular form—Christianity—"has created in Europe a magnificent tension of the spirit the like of which had never yet existed on earth: with so tense a bow we can now shoot for more distant goals" (Nietzsche 1966, 3). By creating an unattainable goal to strive for, namely a perspective-free truth, Platonism created a striving spirit, one that identifies with something heroic, while at the same time, by denying perspective, "the basic condition of all life" (Nietzsche 1966, 3), alienated human beings from the source of their wills, the embodied experience of life.

The answer to our question as to the value of the dogmatic philosophical systems, then, is that they add the heroism lacking in other forms of knowledge. But what is the value of heroism? One might think, on the basis of much of Nietzsche's writing, that when we are able to live in a system of understanding that allows us to express the desires generated in that system, that is, when our wills find expression, that we have found a healthy form of truth. Why does Nietzsche add the requirement that our perspectives be made heroic, that our passions be spiritualized (Nietzsche 1968a, 42)?

Heroism is not required for any epistemological reasons. Rather, Nietzsche's interest in the heroic grows out of one aspect of his doctrine of the will. In his work, there are two contradictory views of the will. According to one, the will's natural liveliness is maintained when our discourses of knowledge are able to express and integrate our experiences. Desires grow out of lived existence. What we desire and how we desire it develop out of the context of the meaning the world has for us. As our worlds change, so do our wills. A healthy will continually responds in a lively way to experience. Unsatisfied desires and interests raise epistemological questions. When there is a healthy willing, epistemological questions are raised as the result of questions that require answers; as questions are answered, interest in them disappears.

Within this view of the will, the will to knowledge could be seen as an unfortunate result of a social structure in which certain desires never achieve satisfaction; the result of this lack of satisfaction is that this desire looks like a natural and universal form of the will. The skepticism of the Eleatics is, in this view, an unfortunate reaction to an inability to have the will achieve satisfaction.

Skepticism, for Nietzsche's other doctrine of the will, is anything but unfortunate. Within this view, the will requires cultivation and mastery. Healthy willing requires asceticism and sublimation to fight off the constant threat of nihilism. Skepticism is a healthy articulation of the will because it posits an impossible goal: the attainment of perspective-free knowledge. By setting itself on the quest for this impossible goal, the skeptical will is heightened and becomes powerful enough to fight nihilism. This doctrine of the will involves sublimation as a mechanism for gaining strength and is especially

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close to Nietzsche's valorization of the domination of women, who are seen as seducers: contact with them leads to a degeneration of the will, whereas a seductive game with them, played from a strategic distance, ennobles the will.

This doctrine, which conceptualizes the will as requiring sublimation through asceticism, is associated with Nietzsche's fear of contact with the other (Deleuze 1983, 39).[9] We can see the doctrine of nihilism, which this view requires, as dependent on a fear of the loss of self—only a problem for a certain sort of masculine subject. I will argue that the aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy that valorize domination grow out of this doctrine of the will. If we clearly distinguish these two doctrines of the will in Nietzsche's philosophy, we can see two different epistemological strategies operating in his work: one that criticizes hegemonic operations as destroying the liveliness of the will of individuals operating within a discursive system and the other that valorizes hegemony as leading to the heroism of the will of those few individuals able to have the discursive system valorize their goals and interests, the pursuit of which lead to their own ennoblement.

4: Knowledge, Heroism, And The Body

Nietzsche's call for a heroic form of knowledge shows all of the telltale signs of a sexual phobia, a fear of contact with the other—especially if that other is female (Livingstone 1984, 46).[10] In many passages, Nietzsche argues that one should experience both woman and truth from a distance. The kind of truth that Nietzsche associates with woman and distance is the universalistic truth of the philosophical systems. His view that abstinence, both sexual and epistemological, are required for the development of the will grows out of his fear of association. This valorization of abstinence is not to be found in his alternative view of truth, that is, its growing out of the integration of experience. On the contrary, this truth is fundamentally sensualist. When developing his view of truth as embodied perception, Nietzsche calls for a valorization of sense experience as the source of knowledge and expression of the body's pleasures as required for a healthy willing.

In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche criticizes how Greek philosophy denies the body's desires: "The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato downwards is pathologically conditioned: likewise their estimation of dialectics. Reason = virtue = happiness means merely: one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent *daylight*—the daylight of reason. One must be prudent, clear, bright at any cost: every yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downward*" (1968a, 33; italics in original). The denial of the instincts required by philosophy is nihilistic because it encourages a denial of the will. "The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost, life bright, cold circumspect, conscious, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts, has itself been no more than a form of sickness, another form of sickness—and by

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no means a way back to 'virtue' to 'health' to happiness. . . . To *have* to combat one's instincts—that is the formula for *decadence*: as long as life is *ascending*, happiness and instinct are one" (Nietzsche 1986a, 34; italics in original). Everyday practices of knowledge imply a unity of reason and desire; reason becomes the expression of desire. Universalistic or philosophical knowledge requires the overheated, dominating will that seduction and denial create.

In the preface to *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche deals with the relationship among philosophical knowledge, heroism and woman. In section 3 of the preface, he argues that philosophies are merely interpretations of the body's states, and that bodily pain encourages a more profound philosophy: "Only great pain, the long, slow pain that takes its time—on which we are burned, as it were, with green wood—compels us philosophers to descend to the ultimate depths and to put aside all trust, everything good-natured, everything that would interpose a veil, that is mild, that is medium—things in which formerly we may have found our humanity. I doubt that such pain makes us 'better'; but I know that it makes us much more *profound*" (Nietzsche 1974, 36; italics in original). This pain "is the ultimate liberator of the spirit" because it creates the suspicion in us necessary to move us beyond the surface to great philosophical depths. And, this pain develops the strength and heroism of the will. It also, however, leads to nihilism.

> The trust in life is gone: life itself has become a problem. Yet one should not jump to the conclusion that this necessarily makes one gloomy! Even love of life is still possible—only one loves differently. It is love for a woman who casts doubt in us . . . The attraction of all that is problematic, the delight in an *x* however, is too great in such spiritual and excited men, for this delight cannot continue as a bright glow to engulf all need of the problematic, all danger of uncertainty, even the jealousy of a lover. We know a new happiness. . . . (Nietzsche 1974, 36-37)

This love of the woman who casts doubts represents a sickness, a falling into an abyss from which the philosopher must find a way to extricate himself. The love of the unknown is not heroic but rather morbidly self-indulgent when it leads to such an excitement with negation that his penetrating gaze constantly annihilates all that excites him.

In section 4 of the preface in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche finds the new happiness, referred to at the end of section 3, by renouncing the closeness implied by too deep a searching after truth. "No, this is bad taste, this will to truth, to 'truth at any price,' this youthful madness in the love of truth is spoiled for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too profound. We no longer believe that truth remains truth when her veils have been stripped away; we have lived too much to believe this"

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(Nietzsche 1974, 38). Nietzsche begins *The Gay Science* by discussing a physical sickness he had recently overcome that had strengthened his will; but using this strength to rip the veils off all earthly phenomena would only lead to annihilation. What is needed, rather is a will to remain at the surface, to not penetrate truth, but to keep her at arm's length to admire. The philosopher is strengthened by imposing his interpretation on reality from a distance. When one is aroused but abstinent, sexual desire leads to a heightened sense of the significance of our experiences, to an illusion of profundity. "Perhaps truth is a woman who has reasons for not letting us see her reasons? Perhaps her name is—to speak Greek—Baubo? . . . Oh those Greeks! They know how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. These Greeks were superficial—out of profundity" (Nietzsche 1974, 38).

With reference to both truth and woman, the philosopher must stop at the surface and construct the other that pleases him most. Too close a contact with her will open the great thinker to the possibility of being decentered by the other. Nietzsche conceptualizes this fear of contact as a disgust with the natural functions of a woman's body:

> When we love a woman, we easily conceive a hatred for nature on account of all the repulsive natural functions to which every woman is subject. We prefer not to think of all this; but when our soul touches on these matters for once, it shrugs as it were and looks contemptuously at nature: we feel insulted; nature seems to encroach on our possessions, and with the profanest hand at that. Then we refuse to pay any heed to physiology and decree secretly: "I want to hear nothing about the fact that a human being is more than *soul and form*." "The human being under the skin" is for all lovers a horror and unthinkable, a blasphemy against God and love. (1974, 122; italics in original)

The *aletheia*—truth in the sense of unveiling—of woman reveals a grotesque and obscene physical body. What does the unveiling of truth show? If truth is a discourse through which we make sense out of the world, a naked truth would be impossible. What happens when one looks too deeply into the question of truth, though, is similar to what Nietzsche, the phobic philosopher, gets when he looks at a naked woman: the vertigo of looking into an abyss, the fragmentation of the self that comes from realizing the lack of solidity and stability of what lies beneath the veils.

The true otherness of woman, the realization of which destroys the thinker's autonomy, must be guarded against by maintaining one's distance from woman, just as the flux of reality must be guarded against by reifying it into an

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organized, predictable, and controllable interpretive framework for understanding experience.

> When a man stands in the midst of his own noise, in the midst of his own surf of plans and projects, then he is apt also to see quiet, magical beings gliding past him and to long for their happiness and seclusion: *women*. He almost thinks that his better self dwells there among the women, and that in these quiet regions even the loudest surf turns into deathly quiet, and life itself into a dream about life. Yet! Yet! Noble enthusiast, even on the most beautiful sailboat there is a lot of noise, and unfortunately such small and petty noise. The magic and the most powerful effect of women is, in philosophical language, action at a distance, actio in distans; but this requires first of all and above all, distance. (Nietzsche 1974, 124; italics in original)

5: Women And The "Feminine Operation"

The problem of the relationship among women, truth, and distance is one of the central themes in Derrida's *Spurs*. David Ferrel Krell's book, *Postponements*, is partially a reading of *Spurs* and partially an original exploration of the problematic of woman and truth in Nietzsche. Both of these thinkers argue that there is a feminine side to Nietzsche that one sees in his discussion of woman and distance. Neither thinker seriously engages with the implications of this feminine side for the lives and expressive possibilities of real women (Oliver 1988; Sholes 1989). What Derrida and Krell see as feminine in Nietzsche is his view that truth does not really exist. According to Derrida, "that which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth—*feminine*" (1979, 55; italics in original). Here Derrida accepts the Lacanian schema according to which the feminine is that which exceeds and cannot be incorporated into a symbolic network of meaning in language. For Lacan, there is no such thing as woman. What it means to be woman is to be the other of language, and since the other of language cannot be described, it cannot be captured under any category—which would be required for us to know it as a thing.

In *Spurs*, Derrida wants to claim that Nietzsche's writing of a truth that cannot be written, that is, in showing truth to be something that exists only as a myth, as an other to be pointed to but not to be explicated, Nietzsche's writing of truth is a feminine operation. "Nietzsche's writing is compelled to suspend truth between the tenter-hooks of quotation marks—and suspended there with truth is—all the rest. Nietzsche's writing is an inscription of the truth. And such an inscription, even if we do not venture so far as to call it the feminine itself, is indeed the feminine 'operation' " (Derrida 1979, 57). Here

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Derrida is careful to distinguish writing the feminine, which is impossible, from writing that is a feminine operation. The first is impossible, because the feminine is precisely that which escapes discursive articulation. The latter is possible, for men or for women, as an undermining of the pretensions to truth of the masculine systems of truth. Derrida wants to claim that the feminine operation that Nietzsche effects in his writing on truth is, in a profound sense, feminist. Derrida understands the difficulty of calling Nietzsche a feminist: "Must not these *apparently feminist* propositions be reconciled with the overwhelming corpus of Nietzsche's venomous anti-feminism?" (1979, 57; italics in original). What Derrida goes on to argue is that Nietzsche's critique of feminism must be understood as a critique of women trying to become like men and giving up the special relationship they have to truth through their "powers of simulation," their not playing the game of truth (1979, 61). "And in truth, they too are men, those women feminists so derided by Nietzsche. Feminism is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man. And in order to resemble the masculine dogmatic philosopher this woman lays claim—just as much claim as he—to truth, science and objectivity in all their castrated delusions of virility. Feminism too seeks to castrate. It wants a castrated woman. Gone the style" (Derrida 1979, 65). Still, Derrida claims that there *is* a positive valorization of woman in Nietzsche, and presumably this is the *apparent feminism* he refers to.

> Since she is a model for truth she is able to display the gifts of her seductive power, which rules over dogmatism, and disorients and routs those credulous men, the philosophers. And because she does not believe in the truth (still, she does find that uninteresting truth in her interest) woman remains a model, only this time a good model. But because she is a good model, she is in fact a bad model. She plays at dissimulation, at ornamentation, deceit, artifice, at an artists' philosophy. Hers is an affirmative power. And if she continues to be condemned, it is only from the man's point of view where she repudiates that affirmative power and, in her specular reflection of that foolish dogmatism that she has provoked, belies her belief in truth. (Derrida 1979, 67-69)

Only from the perspective of the valorization of truth is the dissimulation of woman to be seen as negative. For Derrida, Nietzsche's feminism lies in his insight into the superiority of being the other of reason.

Krell's reading of this view of Nietzsche as a feminist takes the point even further: "Writing now with the other hand, as it were, both Nietzsche and Derrida record the plaint of women against 'The foolishness of the dogmatic philosopher, the impotent artist, or the inexperienced seducer' " (1986, 10-11). Woman is the other of discourse, and her one legitimate demand is that

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the man who engages her in a seductive relationship—though not one that ends in consummation—be potent and experienced. For Krell, Nietzsche is a feminist because he feels for women's suffering at not having an adept seducer.

Derrida believes that women, and philosophers engaged in a feminine operation, can see the untruth of discourses of truth. But this whole schema implies that we do not need to question the content of discourses of truth. Sophisticated men can choose not to believe in them, women can mock them. The effects of women being conceptualized as the other of reason, or of men living under a specific regime of truth, are left unexplored in the play in the untruth of truth. And yet, for there to be a realm of untruth, there must be one of truth, even if it is mythological. In order to operate in the symbolic realm, man needs to keep a distance from the other, the negation of which is constitutive for the same. Within this reading of Nietzsche, truth and woman must be kept at a distance in order for the symbolic realm to have the illusion of solidity required for language. Thus, although Krell claims to be valorizing Woman's position, this valorization has little effect on the lives of real women. The symbolic structure remains unchallenged.

As Luce Irigaray writes in *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, "The distance does not come from her, even if, for him, it is at a distance that her charm works. Even if, in the present, he lends her that element of authority. Because he does not wish to see the effect of his operation: the abyss enters. Which holds him off and fascinates him like the attraction of a knife into the other. The other's belly. The other that he no longer approaches simply, except at the risk of his life: some horrendous retaliation for his own act. The removal of one's own self, the decisive incision between the lips that leaves (the other) mute and alluring like the tomb" (1991, 105). By writing this book from the first person perspective of Nietzsche's mythic female lover, Irigaray brings the perspective of a woman into engagement with Nietzsche and challenges the places where his philosophy leaves no room for female existence. She shows how the discourse of distance has mortal consequences for women.

6: Asceticism And Nihilism

In contrast with Derrida and Krell, Nietzsche at least does not claim that he valorizes *actio in distans* for the sake of women. Nietzsche is not interested in asking what operations of truth are the most beneficial for women. His problem is how to create a relationship to truth that increases his own power and the power of the male free spirits he hopes will revive European culture. Because of his fear of the sexual relation, his answer to this problem is to engage in a seductive/ascetic game that strengthens the will by generating both desire and a will to resist.

Nietzsche's demand for heroism through abstinence needs to be questioned in light of its negative implications for women and also in light of Nietzsche's

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own critique of asceticism. As I will argue in the following section, Nietzsche's critique of asceticism can be applied to his own view of the will as requiring negation in order to achieve heroism.

In section 285 of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche asks how modern people will be able to renounce our faith in God when it means giving up on belief in a perpetual guardian and friend, when it means "there is no longer any reason in what happens" (1974, 230). The renunciation of God will entail an enormous loss that we must find a way to give ourselves the power to accept. Nietzsche offers a solution to this problem with a metaphor: "There is lake that one day ceased to permit itself to flow off; it formed a dam where it had hitherto flown off; and ever since this lake is rising higher and higher. Perhaps this very renunciation will also lend us the strength needed to bear this renunciation; perhaps man will rise higher as soon as he ceases to *flow out* into a god" (1974, 230; italics in original). Giving up on the old forms of knowledge, which have given our culture security and meaning, requires above all else, the power to say no and to say no to something very appealing.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche rails against the ascetic priest's anti-life tendencies. One might be tempted to read his diatribe against Christianity as a call for a return to sensuality, for using our sensuous experience as the basis for our discourses of knowledge. But what Nietzsche calls for in his discussion of asceticism and philosophy is a new sublimation of sensualism.

He begins his discussion of asceticism and philosophy with a section on Schopenhauer's and Stendahl's aesthetic theories. He argues that Schopenhauer's equation of beauty with disinterestedness comes from a fear of his own sexual desire. "Of few things does Schopenhauer speak with greater assurance than he does of the effect of aesthetic contemplation: he says of it that it counteracts *sexual* 'interestedness,' like lupulin and camphor; he never wearied of glorifying *this* liberation from the 'will' as the great merit and utility of the aesthetic condition" (Nietzsche 1969, 104-5; italics in original).

Nietzsche contrasts this view of aesthetic beauty as protection from sexuality with Stendahl's view that "the beautiful promises happiness" (1969, 105). He claims that for Stendahl "the beautiful arouses the will ('interestedness')" (1969, 105). Turning this into a critique of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche claims that the theory of disinterestedness masks the philosopher's real interest: "that of a tortured man who gains release from his torture" (Nietzsche 1969, 105). Nietzsche reminds us that Schopenhauer wrote *The World as Will and Representation* when he was a young man, presumably tortured by unfulfilled sexual desire (1969, 105). The philosopher should not, however, run in fear of contact with the other but should play with his desire, gain mastery over it, and use this sublimated desire to generate a more powerful and heroic self.

Nietzsche argues that the asceticism of the philosopher is currently anti-life and must be transformed into a more sublimated form. The current philosophical asceticism does serve a certain life interest, however. Just as Nietzsche

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claims that the priest's asceticism serves the interest of decaying humanity, the philosopher's asceticism serves his interest in a liberation from desire.

> They think of what *they* can least do without: freedom from compulsion, disturbance, noise, from tasks, duties, worries; clear heads; the dance, leap, and flight of ideas; good air, thin, clear, open, dry, like the air of the heights through which all animal being becomes more spiritual and acquires wings; repose in all cellar regions; all dogs nicely chained up; no barking of hostility and shaggy-haired rancor; no gnawing worm of injured ambition; undemanding and obedient intestines, busy as windmills but distant; the heart remote, beyond, heavy with future posthumous—all in all, they think of the ascetic ideal as the cheerful asceticism of an animal become fledged and divine, floating above life rather than in repose. (Nietzsche 1969, 108; italics in original)

The traditional philosopher has an interest in autonomy from other people and from the various bodily needs. Nietzsche claims that the philosopher's life-denying attitude is a version of the priest's asceticism. Even in the case of anti-religious philosophers, the impulse to "intellectual cleanliness" comes from the tradition of the ascetic priest (Nietzsche 1969, 148). "To put it vividly: the ascetic priest provided until the most modern times the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone the philosopher could live and creep about" (Nietzsche 1969, 116).

We should not, however, think that Nietzsche's disgust for this life-denying type leads to a complete rejection of him. Nietzsche claims that philosophy could not have developed without the priest's asceticism. He does not argue for an end to philosophy. He wants a new revived philosophy to take the strength gained through asceticism and turn it to more life-affirming ends.

Nietzsche praises Stendahl as one who wants to relish in an increased desire. But Nietzsche sees the value in this not in terms of sexual expression but, rather, in terms of sublimation. "Every artist knows what harmful effect sexual intercourse has in states of great spiritual tension and preparation; those with the greatest power and the surest instincts do not need to learn this by experience, by unfortunate experience—their 'maternal' instinct ruthlessly disposes of all other stores and accumulations of energy, of animal vigor, for the benefit of the evolving work: the greater energy uses up the lesser" (Nietzsche 1969, 111). The ascetic philosopher is tied to a nihilistic practice to the extent that he attempts to suppress the will that arises out of the body's desires and interests. What Nietzsche wants him to try to do is to cultivate and channel this desire into a heroism that is constructive for culture.

But why is heroism necessary for culture? In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes that the greatest things of humanity have grown out of

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monstrous errors such as Platonism and Vedantism. But by virtue of what are these things great? Nietzsche, in many places, criticizes the weak sort of spirit who needs to believe in a greatness that is other, such as God or truth, in order to position itself in reality. In section 283 from *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche is jubilant at the prospect of a masculine and warlike age in which knowledge will become heroic. Men will "wage war for the sake of ideas and their consequences. . . . Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors, you seekers of knowledge" (Nietzsche 1974, 228). So long as the philosopher cannot possess knowledge, or woman for that matter, he should at least not allow himself to be emasculated by giving up the quest. "Soon the age will be past when you could be content to live hidden in the forest like shy deer. If he maintains a warlike stance, if he poses as a fighter, as one who knows what he is looking for, woman will find him attractive and give him the illusion of conquest. Finally, knowledge will reach out her hand to him who deserves her" (Nietzsche 1974, 229). Similarly, in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes of the traditional philosopher's failures at the game of seduction: "Assuming truth is a woman—what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far have been very awkward and indecent attempts to win themselves a wench" (1966, 2).

Nietzsche's rhetoric of the need for a masculine and warlike knowledge that will lead us to greatness in culture and attract truth toward him grows out of his own need for an other to dominate. By creating a discourse of knowledge that keeps women as the other and as the object of desire, Nietzsche guarantees for himself a solid other, a reflection from which a stability is given to the self that prevents the madness of falling into the abyss. If Nietzsche gets so close to woman that she begins to speak and show herself to also be a fluid subject, the tain is removed from the mirror and the self is in danger of dispersing into the Dionysian flux.

7: The Self And Unequal Exchange

Nietzsche's theory of knowledge as embodied perception is based on a theory of the self as a fiction that grows out of a reification of one's body's actions. The self comes to appear as something coherent and generated by one source—consciousness. This myth of the coherent self based in consciousness allows the individual to see her/him self as the author of her/his actions. With this view of the will as self generating, we could see the self as generated out of the concrete individual's situated practices. The fluidity of the self that follows from this could, in theory, be lived unproblematically. The 'I' that is the author could be recognized as a myth and yet still be lived through. Nietzsche's theory

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of knowledge as masculine heroism is based on another view of the self that requires more stability than this theory of the self as a fiction—this other theory is the view of the self associated with the heroic notion of the will. Through seeing themselves as free from human interdependencies, men are able to ignore the debt their selves owe to women and to sensual existence. This enables them to set up a system of symbolic exchange in which women are objects of exchange. Using the Marxian theory of the unequal exchange of commodities as a metaphor, Irigaray writes:

> . . . just as commodities, despite their resistance, become more or less autonomous repositories for the value of human work, so, as mirrors of and for man, women more or less unwittingly come to represent the danger of a disappropriation of masculine power: the phallic mirage. . . . This transformation of women's bodies into use values and exchange values inaugurates the symbolic order, but that order depends upon a nearly pure added value. Women, animals endowed with speech like men, assure the possibility of the use and circulation of the symbolic without being recipients of it. Their nonaccess to the symbolic is what has established the social order. Putting men in touch with each other, in relations among themselves, women only fulfill this role by relinquishing their right to speech and even to animality. (1985, 190)

The problem with perceiving the self's lack of solidity that a man encounters upon contact with the concrete other is that the symbolic order of meaning is disrupted. This order must maintain its solidity if male domination is to be replicated through the system of unequal exchange.

Although Nietzsche is highly critical of the reifications implicit in the symbolic order, as a man he is invested in the perpetuation of this system of unequal exchange. At the end of a long section on women in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes, "If the majority of people had not always considered the discipline of their minds—their 'rationality'—a matter of pride, an obligation, and a virtue, feeling insulted or embarrassed by all fantasies and debaucheries of thought because they saw themselves as friends of 'healthy common sense,' humanity would have perished long ago" (1974, 130). It is necessary for the maintenance of social order that the majority of people believe in rationality and truth. The free spirit is able to play freely within the structure of domination and privilege set up by these beliefs. "Thus the virtuous intellects are needed—oh let me use the most unambiguous word—what is needed is *virtuous stupidity*, solid metronomes for the slow spirit, to make sure that the faithful of the great shared faith stay together and continue their dance. It is a first-rate need that commands and demands this. *We others are the exception and the dan*ger—and we need eternally defense.—Well there actually are things to

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be said in favor of the exception, *provided it never wants to become the rule*" (Nietzsche 1974, 131; italics in original). While Nietzsche does not explicitly argue here that this stability is required for the maintenance of the current gender system, this passage is placed at the end of a long polemic on the need for women to stay in their place.[11] Thus, Nietzsche can be seen as arguing for the need for woman to remain the other of the symbolic in order for there to be enough stability for the present power relations to be maintained.

The strength of will required for abstinence is, therefore, not developed simply in the interest of sublimation. For Nietzsche, the will is self generating as long as it maintains a healthy relationship to life. There is no reason to suppose that the will requires stimulation. Life is stimulating enough for a healthy willing. Cultivation of the will is only required to fight against nihilism. And nihilism only develops when the will is suppressed. Nietzsche's call for distance from the other through sexual abstinence as a means of elevating the will is, therefore, a charade to cover his fear of annihilation or loss into the other.

8: Beyond An Epistemology Of Heroism

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche gives a playful description of his perspectival approach to knowledge: "Appearance for me is life and effectivity itself. It goes so far in its self-mockery that it makes me feel that it is nothing more than appearance, and will-o'-the-wisp and a dance of spirits—that among all of these dreamers, also I the one who knows [that I am dreaming], dance my dance, the 'one who knows' is a means for prolonging the earthly dance and thus belongs to the masters of ceremony of existence, and the sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to preserve the universality of dreaming and the mutual comprehension of all dreamers and thus the continuation of the dream" (1974, 116). Nietzsche knows that truth is an error, that understanding is based on a dream or illusion through which a group is able to have consciousness of a common reality. This common understanding, while based on illusion, is necessary for language and human interaction. The myth of truth is necessary to life.

But why does this dream require masters of the ceremonies? Why is it not possible for the common illusion to simply grow out of our interactions with one another? Nietzsche does not even begin to answer the question of how we can do without masters of the ceremonies since this was not a question that concerned him. For him it had been enough that he and a small community of comrades were able to find a discourse of knowledge in which their wills were able to find expression. His need to suppress his will when it came to sexual connection with the other led him to make bizarre claims about the need for heroism and domination, claims which are not required for at least one possible reading of his doctrine of the will. Nietzsche seemed unaware of the nihilistic

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implications of positing woman as an absolute other and the impossibility of an affirmative culture on the basis of this denial of the will.

If we reject Nietzsche's demand for a heroic, universalistic form of knowledge, we are left with an approach to the question of truth that has much to offer feminists and others interested in challenging relations of domination as they become embedded in idea systems. Reading Nietzsche helps to lay the groundwork for a critique of claims to reason and logic that work to put systematic constraints on what views and types of experiences are allowed to appear in the cultural world as legitimate. Also we are given the basis for an epistemology that exists beyond the mind/body split and that has the potential for being democratic.

Following the trajectory outlined by Nietzsche's blind spots about heroism, we are lead to see some of the problems implicit in notions of greatness and transcendence still at the core of Western culture's aesthetic philosophies. If we see culture as a rich and constantly regenerating process, when it is able to grow out of a dynamic relationship between lived experience and communication, there is no reason to believe that life can't stay interesting and meaningful without positing unattainable greatness beyond the world of experience.

Nietzsche's theory of embodied perception is helpful to feminists who are concerned about the variety of ways that women are positioned socially relative to the mind/body split. In terms of other discourses of power, Nietzsche's theory is helpful to theorists of sexuality by encouraging their suspicion of theories that privilege the agon of heterosexual binarism as a necessary foundation for passionate desire (Lungstrom 1994). Also, many people who are cynical about the possibility of overcoming racism point to a psychological need for human beings to create an other over and against which to consolidate a sense of self. Nietzsche's doctrine of masculine heroism would probably accord with this view. In his theory of embodied perception we have a good critique of the necessity of the othering that is a part of racism. Nietzsche's theory of embodied perception encourages us to wonder about the life-denying practices that lead to a desire to create a despised other. When a society has a widely accepted knowledge system that systematically declares as insignificant the experiences and truth practices of certain members of that society, Nietzsche's philosophy would encourage us to look into that system of negation as a source of nihilism.

While linguistic practices always generate interpretive frameworks, which themselves always imply discourses of truth and reason, they do not necessarily imply doctrines of truth that posit a hostile relationship to the body or to perspectivism. Because discourses of truth always abstract from experience and reify experience according to the interests of those with the power to control the discourse, we can see the sources of the hegemonic nature of reason. If we accept the reading of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will, according to which

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willing is a self generating engagement with life, then we can use instances of systematic repression as evidence of nihilistic, unhealthy and hegemonic discourses of truth.[12] Nietzsche's epistemology of embodied perception encourages us to look into discourses of truth as symptoms of hidden operations of power in social systems. His epistemology also encourages us to be suspicious of systems that are hostile to the body and lived experience.

When people adopt worldviews that don't allow for the expression of their lived sensuous existence, a hostile relationship between mind and body results. While Nietzsche does not even begin to approach the question of the social implications of the silencing of women, his epistemology offers insights for those of us interested in these implications. In working to bring the voices of women and of all those whose interests have been excluded from articulation in the current dominant discourse of reason, we can begin to move beyond the nihilism and forms of domination philosophical reason generates and reinforces.

NOTES

1. In many of the quotations from Nietzsche the translations have been modified slightly to improve clarity or, as in the case of Menschen, to remove gender bias.

2. The same could be said for racial or sexual domination. The specific discourses that are used to construct dominant visions of racial minorities in the US, sexual minorities, and colonized peoples each has its own texture and details associated with it. Of course, those discourses inflect one another in complex ways, so that there is no one form of oppression that women as a group experience. Nietzsche's theory of embodied perception can be used to critique many forms of cultural hegemony.

3. For interesting histories of Nietzsche's reception in Germany see: Thomas (1983) and Helm (1995).

4. At the onslaught of his madness and the end of his writing career, Nietzsche left volumes of unpublished notes and had intended to publish a book called *The Will to Power*. For a history of the politics surrounding his sister's editing of these notes and of her political interests, see the introduction to the English translation of *The Will to Power*, translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann (1968).

5. In *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, Mark Warren makes a strong case for the view that Nietzsche's elitism is accidental to his most significant philosophical positions.

6. The debate between Habermas and Lyotard can be seen in terms of the authors' different views on Nietzsche. Lyotard reads Nietzsche as an anti-epistemologist and takes him as an ally. Habermas argues that Nietzsche's anti-epistemological position is incoherent.

7. Werner Stegmaier argues that Nietzsche does not have a theory of truth, but rather, he tries to re-define the latitude of such theories.

8. In *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, Peter Sloterdijk claims that Nietzsche's most significant innovation is his "uncovering of the physicality of thought" (1989, 67). Curiously, though, Sloterdijk goes on to distinguish thought in which *physis* is illuminated from the operation of logos' descent into the body. One of my central

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theses here is that there is no logos in itself that *could* descend into the body. If we reject the idea that ideas ever could exist autonomously and go "in search of a body" (Sloterdijk 1989, 83), then we cannot use the model of internally versus externally derived ideas to distinguish between positive and negative epistemological practices.

9. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze presents a very different interpretation of the doctrine of the will. According to Deleuze, there are two different wills in Nietzsche, one active and one reactive. The active form of the will is the one that dominates; the forces that are dominated are called reactive. It is hard to make sense of this doctrine, because the distinguishing characteristic between the two forms of will is their relative successes. What this amounts to is a "might makes right" doctrine—those forces that win are called healthy *because* they have won. This interpretation is not helpful philosophically and is dangerous politically.

10. It is interesting that Nietzsche never married and that his close relationships with women were, in general, quite difficult. His relationships with his mother and sister are reported to have been tortuous. He seems to have been in love with Cosima Wagner, the wife of his friend and mentor Richard Wagner. This relationship is an example of sublimated "love at a distance." His relationship with Lou Salomé was extremely complicated. In her study of Lou Salomé, Angela Livingstone writes that Salomé shared Nietzsche's view that physical love should be avoided, because, in her view, "it was a great mistake to do away with the traditional prizing of virginity in middle class girls: virginity could lead them to productivity, even to heroism. Nietzsche seems to have thought similarly" (1984, 46). Thus, although Nietzsche and Salomé had a very close and intense relationship, the fact that it did not become a physical one, or at least not a sustained physical one, follows the pattern I am suggesting.

11. Women are the main theme of sections 59-75.

12. This is not to say that all negation of the will necessarily implies a hegemonic operation. Given the flexibility of the will and of desire, the interests of the will are constantly being formed and cultivated through social practices. Still, we can look to instances of sustained resistance as sites of operations of domination.

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