ONE

NIETZSCHE AND THE PATHOS OF DISTANCE

JEANETTE WINTERSON, in her novel *Sexing the Cherry*, describes the city of Jordan's dreams. A city

> whose inhabitants are so cunning that to escape the insistence of creditors they knock down their houses in a single night and rebuild them elsewhere. So the number of buildings in the city is always constant but they are never in the same place from one day to the next.
>
> For close families, and most people in the city are close families, this presents no problem, and it is more usual than not for the escapees to find their pursuers waiting for them on the new site of their choice.
>
> As a subterfuge, then, it has little to recommend it, but as a game it is a most fulfilling pastime and accounts for the extraordinary longevity of the men and women who live there. We were all nomads once, and crossed the deserts and the seas on tracks that could not be detected, but were clear to those who knew the way. Since settling down and rooting like trees, but without the ability to make use of the wind to scatter our seed, we have found only infection and discontent.

> In the city the inhabitants have reconciled two discordant desires: to remain in one place and to leave it behind forever. (Winterson 1989, 42–43)

This is a postmodern city. It is built on the recognition that one's place within a political and social space rests on unstable foundations. Places can change. This instability arises from the complex creditor/debtor relations that characterize subjectivity: the self only gains a place in the world through the other's proximity, making self-present autonomy, freedom from debt to one's creditor, difficult, if not impossible. The best that one can hope for is a reconciliation of the desire for stability, for proximity to oneself (and hence to one's creditor), and the desire for change, distance, difference.

Winterson's city encapsulates Nietzsche's philosophy of self—a philosophy that sits uneasily between two streams of thought in Anglophone philosophy. On the one side is social contract theory and liberal individualism which, in the name of stability and sameness, assumes that society consists of relations of contract and exchange between free and equal, autonomous, and self-present individuals. On the other side is the declaration that self-mastery and self-identity are dead, along with the ideal of uniform social relations that these notions of self support. Rather than a society consisting of unified individuals governed by a common good, this alternative position variously posits a self dispersed into a multiplicity of differences, and it promotes a distant respect for difference (not othering the other, letting the other be) over universal values or a common good that is said to be both invalid and oppressive.

Nietzsche's aesthetics of self has more in common with this latter position than it does with the self-presence underscoring the contract model of social relations. However, the reading of his philosophy that I offer below cautions against simple declarations of the death of self-presence that assume the ability to promote change and difference by declaring the dispersal of identity and by distancing oneself from others. My aim is to explore Nietzsche's contributions to an understanding of the social production of identity and difference (including sexual difference) as the "problematic of the constitution of place" in relation to others in terms of a giving of oneself to and through the other.

There are at least two aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy that I will highlight that warn against the form of postmodernism mentioned. The first

is his analysis of the self as a corporeal cultural artifact, which suggests that any change in self involves a material production rather than a change of mind (or a simple declaration that the self is dispersed). Second, while Nietzsche's project for self-overcoming reads at times like an escape from others, there is much to suggest that the other, through her generosity, is deeply implicated in this process of self-formation. His philosophy of the body, his understanding of the self/other relation as a debtor/creditor relation, and his concept of will to power (understood in ontological terms) all draw on a concept of distance as a process of production of a division within the self and difference between the self and others. This is a distancing that is infused with proximity, a production of identity and difference through the other's generosity, so that denial of the trace of the other in the self's overcoming, whether through respect or arrogance, incurs an unacknowledged debt to them. This understanding of the operation of distance in Nietzsche's philosophy has important consequences for rethinking sexual difference within the context of a postmodern aesthetics of self.

THE BODY AND ONE'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

For Nietzsche, the problematic of the constitution of place is a question of the social constitution of a body. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* he claims that "body I am entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body" (1978, 34). In contrast to the assumptions that the self's identity can be reduced to consciousness, and that the mind directs the body, Nietzsche claims that the body is what compares and creates, and that thought and the ego are its instruments. This body, however, is not an asocial fact. Like any "thing," a body is the sum of its effects insofar as those effects are united by a concept (1967, 296). The "body is only a social structure composed of many souls" (1973, 31), where "soul" refers to a corporeal multiplicity or a "social structure of the drives and emotions" (25). So, for Nietzsche, one's place in the world is built through the concepts that govern the social world and sculpt the body—a body that is a "unity as an organization" and therefore a "work of art" (1967, 419).

How the corporeal self is constituted as a social structure of drives and emotions is first a question of how the body is unified through social concepts. Second, and related to this process of unification, is the question of how thought and the ego are instruments of the body. The body is the

locus of pleasure and pain (which are always already interpretations), and thought arises from and is a reflection on pleasure and pain (a point I develop further in chapter 7). To quote Nietzsche:

> The self says to the ego, "Feel pain here!" Then the ego suffers and thinks how it might suffer no more—and that is why it is *made* to think.
>
> The self says to the ego, "Feel pleasure here!" Then the ego is pleased and thinks how it might often be pleased again—and that is why it is *made* to think. (1978, 35)

Thought, then, is about the projection of bodily experience into the future; the conscious thinking subject is an effect of temporalizing the body.

The target for much of Nietzsche's critical attention is the manner in which experience is unified and the body is temporalized in the social relations of modernity. Here the embodied self is constituted by social concepts and norms that discourage difference, inconsistency, nonconformity, and change. His account in the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* begins with the idea that the unification of any body relies on the operation of memory and forgetting. "Forgetting" is the incorporation of bodily affects before they become conscious and a making way for new sensations by allowing one to "have done" with the old (1969, 58). But while this not-remembering is necessary for the constitution of any self as present, the making of the modern moral subject, the individual who is responsible for his or her acts enough to enter social contracts, requires a faculty that opposes forgetting—memory.

Nietzsche describes how the social and moral discourses of modernity constitute a particular kind of memory, a memory that unifies a selection of activities, events, experiences, and effects so that they belong to one person (1969, 58). This memory makes the self constant and apparently unchanging through time by projecting the same body into the future. The operation of memory and forgetting unifies experience in another sense—it makes different experiences the same. What is remembered is not just an experience but a socially prescribed mode of interpreting that experience. As Nietzsche explains in *Twilight of the Idols* (1968, 50–53), effects and events are incorporated by interpretation using prevailing moral norms and the concept of cause. Unpleasant feelings are said to

be caused by actions considered undesirable. Pleasant feelings are said to arise from good or successful actions (52). Hence, "everything of which we become conscious is arranged, simplified, schematized, interpreted through and through . . . pleasure and displeasure are subsequent and derivative phenomena" (Nietzsche 1967, 263–64).[1] So even forgetting as having done with an event involves first, dividing effects into those that are written into the body and those that are not. Second, events which are incorporated and upon which one reflects are divided into a cause and an effect, where the effect is pleasure or displeasure and the cause is interpreted according to social moral norms. Then, when encountering a new event or effect, the memory "calls up earlier states of a similar kind and the causal interpretations which have grown out of them" (Nietzsche 1968, 51). New experiences are subsumed under habitual interpretations, making every experience a fabrication (Nietzsche 1973, 97).

The individual is not the author of this dutiful memory—it is created through what Nietzsche calls the "mnemotechnics of pain" (1969, 61): techniques of punishment that carry social norms and moral values. "Body I am entirely," insofar as my conscience, sense of responsibility, and uniformity, is created by an ordering of sensations and by projection of the body into the future through a social disciplinary system. This ensures not only that my experiences are consistent over time but, as we are subjected to the same moral values, we will have "our experience in common" (Nietzsche 1973, 186). Forgetting in conjunction with a selective memory becomes a social instrument of repression against the dangers of inconsistency and nonconformity. A society that favors consistency and conformity discourages us to leave our place behind.

Contrary to social contract theory and liberal individualism, Nietzsche proposes that the individual is a culturally specific corporeal artifact whose existence is a product of the exclusion of other possibilities for one's embodied place in the world. But this account leaves Nietzsche with a problem shared also by those who find the assumption of self-presence and ideals of universal values oppressive: how can change be effected given that the self is the result of a socially informed material process of production? How can different possibilities for existence be opened, how can one leave one's place behind, without assuming the possibility of stepping outside of either one's present body or one's social context? It is Nietzsche's concept of a distance within the self that addresses this apparent impasse.

DISTANCE AND SELF-OVERCOMING

The body that conforms to a uniform mode of subjection is one that acts out a social role imposed upon it.[2] In contrast to this actor, Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, privileges a process of self-fabrication with the artistic ability to stage, watch, and overcome the self according to a self-given plan (1974, 132–33). He draws on two features of art and the artist to characterize self-overcoming (163–64). The first is the suggestion that the self, like any artifact, is an interpretation, a perspective, or a mask. Second, the relation between artists and their art illustrates the point that creating beyond the present self requires that we view ourselves from a distance in an image outside of ourselves. Leaving behind the influence of social concepts that restrict our place in the world requires treating one's corporeality as a work of art.

The distinction that Nietzsche makes between the self as artist and the image or spectacle of the self staged beyond the present body could imply a unique, extra-social invention. But at a less ambitious level it suggests that one is never identical with oneself. Nietzsche sometimes refers to this difference within the self as the "pathos of distance,"

> that longing for an ever increasing widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states, in short precisely the elevation of the type "man," the continual "self-overcoming of man," to take a moral formula in a supra-moral sense. (1973, 173)

What Nietzsche is suggesting here is that the ability to move beyond oneself hinges on a distance within the soul (where the soul is something about the body). A distance or difference within the self, between the present self and an image of self toward which I aspire, is necessary for transformation of the corporeal self. We should not confuse the artist and his work, says Nietzsche, "as if [the artist] were what he is able to represent, conceive, and express. The fact is that if he were it, he would not represent, conceive, and express it" (Nietzsche 1969, 101). The self as a work of art is never the same as the self that creates it, not because the self as artist is the true or essential self in contrast to a false, unique, extra-social image projected, rather, the image the artistic self creates is a moment beyond the present self that creates it. The

difference, or distance, between the two is a precondition to self-formation and transformation.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche accounts for this distance within the self in terms of a process of self-temporalization of the body that subverts the notion of linear time assumed in normalizing social structures. Unlike the "last man," who views himself as the essential, unchangeable endpoint of his history (Nietzsche 1978, 202), the overman views himself as a moment. He risks his present self or, as Nietzsche puts it, "goes under" (14–15). But unlike the "higher man," who, in a manner not unlike the "postmodern" self, affirms the future by negating the past and skipping over existence, thereby changing nothing (286-95), the overman risks himself by "willing backwards": "To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all 'it was' into 'thus I willed it'—that alone I should call redemption" (139). Moving beyond the present self is not a matter of declaring oneself born again by simply reaching for a new part to play: it requires working on oneself. The overman then is the self that is a moment that temporalizes itself by recreating its past as a way of projecting itself into the future. This self-temporalization produces a distance or difference within the self.

The idea that the corporeal self is reproduced differently as it is temporalized through the production of a distance within the self would seem to be at odds with Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. Problems arise if we accept eternal recurrence as either a cosmological hypothesis, where the world repeats itself infinitely (Nietzsche 1967, 521), or a psychological doctrine, where self-affirmation involves the desire for the self to recur eternally the same (Nietzsche 1978, 322). However, as David Wood (1988) has demonstrated, interpreting the doctrine of eternal recurrence exclusively in either of these ways is ultimately untenable.[3]

Nietzsche's presentation of the doctrine in "The Vision and the Riddle" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1978, 85–87) suggests another interpretation. Here, eternal recurrence is presented in terms of a further revaluation of linear time that suggests that there is always difference in repetition. Here, Zarathustra, on a "bridge across becoming," recounts his vision of climbing a mountain while carrying on his back his "archenemy, the spirit of gravity." Zarathustra is attempting to climb toward the future, but the spirit of gravity, of which man suffers if he cannot go beyond himself, threatens to drag him back toward himself. "You threw yourself up high," says gravity to Zarathustra, "but every stone must fall . . . the stone will fall back on yourself" (156).

The spirit of gravity is suggesting a notion of return that is cyclic: you cannot escape what you are; you will always return to yourself the same.

While Zarathustra affirms this notion of repetition of self ("was that life? well then! once more"), he goes on to reinterpret it. He points to a gateway called "the moment," claiming that from this moment a path leads backward to eternity and another contradictory path leads forward to eternity: the future contradicts the past, and both the future and the past lead out from the present moment. Zarathustra then goes on to suggest that all that leads backward from the moment, all that has been, has been before, as has this moment. And because all things are knotted together, then this moment draws after it all that is to come. Therefore, he asks, must not all of us have been at this moment before, and must we not eternally return?

What Nietzsche seems to be suggesting is a return of self involving a temporality where the self does not seek to escape the past (linear time) nor simply to repeat it (cyclic). By describing time as emerging out of the moment, Nietzsche is suggesting, in keeping with his notion of self-overcoming, that one temporalizes oneself. The self recreates the past (or what one has been) at every moment as it projects itself toward a future. The future is also created out of the present. The contingent future, governed by others, is made one's own through the present, where the present is a reconstitution of the past. And by making the present moment its own, the self also distances itself from a necessary past and future.

At the same time, according to Nietzsche, each moment eternally recurs and contains every other moment that constitutes the temporalized self. As Zarathustra suggests, there is no outside the moment that is the present self: "how should there be an outside-myself? There is no outside" (217). This is not to say that the self is transcendental or unchanging. On the contrary, to recreate the past, or one's "it was," by making it "thus I willed it" is to give birth to the self anew. But while the self is different at every moment, these different moments are not self-contained. There is no outside the self in the sense that the moment, which is the present self, contains traces of its relation to a past and future that are different. The structure of the moment is one where the self exceeds its present self rather than one where the self is self-present and self-identical. Man is "an imperfect tense" (Nietzsche 1983, 61): his past is never complete in relation to his present.

The distancing effected by making the moment one's own is not a state of mind: it "creates a higher body" (Nietzsche 1978, 70)—the overman

"begets and bears" (Nietzsche 1973, 113) a future corporeal self that is beyond and different from himself. The pathos of distance within the self, generated by making the moment one's own, allows the self to remain in one place while leaving it behind forever. But this is not a simple rejection of one's embodied place in the world. Nietzsche's formulation of a distance within the self reopens what is denied by social discourses which, in assuming an unchanging subject over time, assume that "what is does not become" (Nietzsche 1968, 35). This assumption of sameness is an "escape from sense-deception, from becoming, from history" (ibid.). The history that conformity disavows is the process of incorporating new experiences and shedding the old, reconciling conflicting impulses, the ongoing process of corporeal self-fabrication, according to concepts that one has inherited and cultivated (Nietzsche 1973, 96–104; 1974, 269–71).

DISTANCE AND THE CREDITOR/DEBTOR RELATION

While Nietzsche's understanding of creative self-fabrication allows a reconciliation of the discordant desires in Winterson's dream, it remains an uneasy formulation with respect to justice and the other. Nietzsche often speaks as if the distance within the self effected by making the moment one's own is generated by the self alone; in Nietzsche's work, self-overcoming is often presented as an autonomous, self-contained project. Yet in *Untimely Meditations* ("Schopenhauer as Educator"), for example, Nietzsche suggests that rather than finding ourselves within ourselves, we are more likely to find ourselves outside of ourselves, that is, in our effects, in "everything [that] bears witness to what we are, our friendships and our enmities, our glance and the clasp of our hand, our memory and that which we do not remember, our books and our handwriting," in the objects we love (Nietzsche 1983, 129). In other words, the self is not just divided between the remembered and the forgotten, the future and the past, but between the self and the other. There is something about our relation to others that mediates the place we occupy within social relations. Hence, contrary to some postmodern formulations of a dispersed self who does not "other" others, creative self-fabrication, changing places, implicates others in some sense. The distance necessary to self-overcoming is given in proximity to others.

Nietzsche's genealogies of justice and punishment typically reveal the ways others are involved in the constitution of one's place in the world.

These genealogies contain a tension between understanding the self/other relation in terms of a contract between creditor and debtor and understanding it in terms of a gift of being. The most fundamental social relation is, Nietzsche claims, the creditor/debtor relation, where "one person first measured himself against another" (1969, 70). Inflicting pain on another was "originally" a way of recovering a debt rather than creating the memory necessary for conformity. And this involved evaluating different parts of the body to ensure that the pain inflicted was equivalent to the debt owed (62–65). Under such a system, evaluation is of the body and operates by mutual agreement. Debts can be repaid through the body via a contractual arrangement between creditor and debtor. If the relation between self and other can be said to involve a contract, this contract is written in blood, and the status of the creditor is built from the flesh of the debtor.

But what is the nature of this debt that is supposedly repaid through corporeal measurement? As determining values, establishing and exchanging equivalences is the most fundamental social arrangement, it is not just a question of commodity exchange. A precondition to such exchange of gifts and commodities is evaluation of one's own body in relation to another, a process of evaluation that is constitutive of one's place in the world. While Nietzsche sometimes speaks as if there is an original difference between debtor and creditor, the self only becomes different, a distinct entity, by distancing itself from others. This distancing itself is a mode of production involving measurement and will to power, whereby identity and difference are given.

The relation between self and other is governed by will to power: by language as an expression of power, by the use of concepts to measure, interpret, and draw distinctions. According to Nietzsche, if we eliminate concepts that we impose, such as number, thing, activity, and motion, then

> no things remain but only dynamic quanta, in relation of tension to all other dynamic quanta: their essence lies in their relation to all other quanta, in their "effect" upon the same. The will to power not a being, not a becoming, but a *pathos*—the most elemental fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge. (1967, 339)

To say that will to power is pathos refers us to the distinction between ethos and pathos that Nietzsche evokes elsewhere (1974, 252). Ethos is usually

understood as a way of life, of one's habits and character, whereas pathos is the condition of transient affectivity. While we think of our way of life as a given and an enduring ethos, our life, Nietzsche argues, is really pathos, a dynamic process of changing affective experience. Will to power is pathos: it is the movement by which experience is constituted and entities come into being so that they are in relation and can be affected and can affect.[4]

Will to power as interpretation operates within intersubjective relations where, as Nietzsche claims in reference to love, "our pleasure in ourselves tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new into ourselves" (1974, 88). Measuring the other is a way of enhancing our own form, capacities, and effects. But again, neither the self nor the other (whether the other is another person or a "thing") exists in essence apart from this relation, that is, apart from "the effect it produces and that which it resists" (Nietzsche 1967, 337). In other words, individuals, and the differences between them, are not given in themselves. They are an effect of

> creation and imposition of forms . . . [within] a ruling structure which *lives,* in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not been first assigned a "meaning" in relation to a whole. (1969, 86–87)

Will to power is this process of the constitution of identity and place, of delimiting one from another, through the assignment of "meaning" to effects and their interrelations. So any difference between parties to a contract is an effect of will to power as productive interpretation by which entities are constituted in relation. This distance/difference between self and other is predicated upon measurement: the credit of identity and difference is extracted in proximity to the other in a process where debts may be incurred.

Justice, for Nietzsche, is the constitution of identity and difference without debt. In an exchange economy, justice would be reciprocal exchange, exchange without loss or without a debt being incurred by either party. One way Nietzsche puts this idea of justice within an exchange economy is, as Schrift points out (1994, 34), in terms of giving with an expectation of equivalent return:

> Justice (fairness) originates among approximately *equal powers.* . . . [T]he initial character of justice is *barter.* Each satisfies the other

> in that each gets what he values more than the other. Each man gives the other what he wants, to keep henceforth, and receives in turn that which he wishes. Thus, justice is requital and exchange on the assumption of approximately equal positions of strength. For this reason, revenge belongs initially to the realm of justice: it is an exchange. Likewise gratitude. (Nietzsche 1984, 64)

That giving would be reciprocated in equal measure, without debt or loss, and so that justice could be achieved, assumes the parties involved are already of "approximately equal power" (1969, 70; 1984, 64). At one level, "approximately equal power" means that both parties have the power to enforce their own evaluations. But in the context of Nietzsche's understanding of will to power as production of identity through measurement, "approximately equal power" also means a balance in the distribution of productive power. The possibility of justice, that mutual understanding necessary for return of gifts and equitable exchange without loss or debt, assumes that the selves involved are already constituted by the same mode of evaluation. That is, justice in an exchange economy assumes that will to power as interpretation operates uniformly to produce all bodies as the same. As Nietzsche puts it in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> To refrain from mutual injury, mutual violence, mutual exploitation, to equate one's own will with that of another: this may in a certain rough sense become good manners between individuals if the conditions for it are present (namely if their strength and value standards are in fact similar and they both belong to *one* body). (1973, 174)

Belonging to one social body, within which it is possible to settle one's debt to the other, to give without loss, and to refrain from taking from the other, assumes a shared mode of evaluation by which the corporeal self is constituted.

But the possibility of such mutual understanding is at best limited in Nietzsche's model of self-fabrication. A social body may share a language, a mode of interpretation and evaluation, and a mode of self-creation. But self-evaluation occurs in relation to another, and there is always a disjunction between how one evaluates oneself and how one is evaluated by another.

Interpretation of the other is a translation that as a "form of conquest" (Nietzsche 1974, 137) reduces the tempo of the other's style (Nietzsche 1973, 41). The style projected becomes overlaid by other masks constituted through misunderstanding. The constitution of identity is dissimulation where one's absolute identity is deferred:

> Every profound spirit needs a mask: more, around every profound spirit a mask is continually growing thanks to the constantly false, that is to say *shallow* interpretation of every word he speaks, every step he takes, every sign of life he gives. (1973, 51)[5]

Further, while one's identity is a self-fabrication of the body using concepts that one inherits, there is always a disjunction between the social concepts we share and how each person embodies them:

> Ultimately, the individual derives the value of his acts from himself; because he has to interpret in a quite individual way even the words he has inherited. His interpretation of a formula at least is personal, even if he does not create a formula: as an interpreter he is still creative. (1967, 403)

What Nietzsche exposes in his genealogy of justice and the creditor/debtor relation is that justice, giving with expectation of equivalent return and hence the exchange of equivalences, already assumes sameness. And second, insofar as the parties involved are only at best approximately the same, then evaluation involves some subtraction from the other to the benefit of the self. Social exchange does not begin with a contract between independent individuals (1969, 86). It is always a matter of will to power as self-constitution, and insofar as this exchange is "successful" or "just," it assumes and promotes sameness. Yet in assuming that the other is the same, one reduces the other to the self, one takes from the other, and "deliberately and recklessly brush[es] the dust off the wings off the butterfly that is called moment" (Nietzsche 1974, 137), that contradictory moment that is the site of self-overcoming and the production of difference.

Despite indications that one's identity and place in the world can never be reduced to another's, the discourses of modernity assume sameness and encourage the desire to stay in one place. Law (which embodies notions

of just and unjust) reflects a community's customs in the sense of a mode of evaluation and interpretation (Nietzsche 1969, 71–76; 1984, 219). While some law may be necessary to preserve a style of life against difference and transgression, Nietzsche objects to laws (moral or secular) that impose absolute values equally upon all. In this, the notion of justice changes from one that explicitly assumes sameness to one that attempts to achieve sameness of outcome through the production of a corporeal memory, discussed above. Yet what is good for one another is "a question of who he is and who the other is" (a question of identity as measurement) and, as this question cannot be answered (identity is dissimulation), then, "what is right for one cannot by any means be right for another" (Nietzsche 1973, 132, 139). The change in the meaning of justice to equal rights for all is, therefore, the beginning of injustice. "For, to *me* justice speaks thus: 'Men are not equal' " (Nietzsche 1978, 101). " 'Equal rights' could all too easily change into equality of wrongdoing," because it legislates against anything rare, against self-overcoming, against the ability to be different and the need for independence (Nietzsche 1973, 125; 1978, 101). "Equality" legislates against the possibility of the production of distance necessary for changing places.

Relating Nietzsche's notion of will to power as the productive measurement involved in self-constitution to his claim that equality is only possible if equality is already actual suggests that democratic institutions only achieve equality of outcome, and then only approximately, through taking from, negating, or expelling difference. A community, for example, that maintains itself by uniform laws and expects conformity from its members "stands to its members in the same vital basic relation, that of creditor to debtor" (Nietzsche 1969, 71). This is a society that assumes a contract with its members where, in exchange for giving protection, the community expects its members to conform to its laws in return. An expression of nonconformity is taken as a hostile act, a refusal to return the gift. A debt is incurred by the lawbreaker and the "community, the disappointed creditor, will get what repayment it can" through punishment or expulsion (ibid.). This expectation of the return of the gift and the negation of difference involved is not only true of the constitution and maintenance of a uniform community but also of the individual who inhabits it. The democratic, "selfless" individual constitutes its place in the world by negating the value of the other's difference:

> Slave morality says No to what is "outside," what is "different," what is "not itself"; and *this* No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value positing eye—this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself—is the essence of *ressentiment*; in order to exist, slave morality always needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all—its action is fundamentally reaction. (Nietzsche 1969, 36–37)

The democratic, consistent self who can make promises and so enter into contracts is produced and maintained through the operation of will to power as evaluation, by exploitation and appropriation, and through the imposition of a particular form and through the exclusion of others.

Even that social body of equal and harmonious forces, where one can safely assume the return of gifts in the interests of justice, exists as such by marking itself off from an "outside" to which it is hostile:

> Even that body within which, as it was previously assumed, individuals treat one another as equals—this happens in every healthy aristocracy—must, if it is a living and not a decaying body, itself do all that to other bodies which the individuals within it refrain from doing to one another: it will have to be will to power incarnate, it will want to grow, expand, draw to itself, gain ascendancy—not out of any morality or immorality, but because it *lives,* and because life *is* will to power. (Nietzsche 1973, 175)

In the context of the reading of will to power that I have provided, what Nietzsche is suggesting here is that even within the pretense of equality, whether within a "healthy" aristocracy or a nihilistic democracy, the self, or the complex of selves rendered equal, maintains itself by marginalizing others deemed inappropriate to the system. Prior to the mutual exchange of gifts that characterizes justice within an exchange economy, something has already been taken from or given by the other in the constitution of the "difference" between them.

Nietzsche insists that the "overman" is not guilty of this parsimony that misappropriates the other. Self-overcoming, he claims, is not built upon

the assumption of sameness or the negation of the other's difference but upon a mode of self-affirmation that seeks the other after the event, that "seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly" (Nietzsche 1969, 37). Self-overcoming and the overcoming of justice based on the expectation of the return of gifts belong to those communities and individuals who, as Schrift suggests, have the power to forgive transgressions of their laws and values, who have been delivered from revenge (1994, 34–35). Schrift also suggests that Nietzsche, through his ideas of the "overman" and the overcoming of justice based on the creditor/debtor relation, points to an economy based on generosity. "In this economy, gifts can be given without expectation of return, and debts can be forgiven without penalty or shame" (Schrift 1994, 35). Translating this suggestion into ontological terms of the production of identity and difference through will to power, if there is a difference between a generous and a parsimonious relation to the other, it is that creative self-fabrication, rather than negating the other's difference by reducing the other to the self, constitutes a distance, as difference, between self and other. This ability to create distance, to bestow value and meaning, through abundance of power rather than revenge against difference, requires the "gift-giving virtue," or more correctly, it involves the self giving itself without expectation of return (Nietzsche 1978, 74–77).

However, while the self that overcomes itself may not expect or acknowledge a return for the difference it generates, it gets a return through the other anyway. Despite Nietzsche's occasional claims to the contrary, the self cannot give itself without the giving of an other. The pathos of distance within the self, necessary for self-overcoming, is, as with democratic normalization, predicated upon the production of a distance or difference between self and other. Nietzsche admits as much in the same passage describing the pathos of distance within the self, referred to at the beginning of the previous section on self-overcoming:

> Without the *pathos of distance* such as develops from the incarnate differences in classes, from the ruling caste's constant looking out and looking down on subjects and instruments and from its equally constant exercise of obedience and command, its holding down and holding at a distance, that other, more mysterious pathos could not have developed either, that longing for an ever increasing widening of distance within the soul itself. (1973, 173)

So the distance within the soul, within that social structure of drives and emotions that is the self and by which the self transforms itself, is generated through the production of another distance. The eternal return to self involved in making the moment one's own is a return through and from the other. That the overman, in applauding his own generosity, forgets this passage through the other and the giving of the other involved may absolve the other of any debt, but it is a forgetting allowed only by the other's generosity, by the other's capacity to forgive and forget debts, a generosity denied in the self-overcoming that memorializes itself by claiming the moment as its own alone.

This other distancing, necessary to leave one's designated place behind, has its productive effects and so requires further consideration. It is a production of distance that applies not only to relations between classes (as the quote above points to) but also to relations between the sexes. It is to the operation of distance between the sexes, its effects on women, and the possibility of women's artistry that I will now turn.

WOMAN AND ACTION AT A DISTANCE

Just as will to power as measurement is involved in the constitution of any self separate from another, Nietzsche suggests that men create an image of woman in order to shore up something about themselves (1974, 126). In particular, the democratic man who conforms to an unchanging image of himself requires a certain construction of the other to affirm and maintain the appearance of self-consistency and autonomy. This reactive, parsimonious approach to the other does not have to be explicitly denigrating. A man can maintain himself by constructing an ideal and essential image of woman that is simply complementary to himself yet designed for his consumption. This image still serves to affirm the self as unchanging: it silences the noise of other possibilities, the "noise" of the "forgotten." As Nietzsche puts it in *The Gay Science*:

> 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 his better self dwells there among the women. (1974, 124)

The truth of woman, the eternal feminine, promises to affirm an unchanging self. But as identity is constituted in relation, the self that posits itself as autonomous and transcendental is not complete without incorporation or negation of what is other: man's desire is to possess this image of woman that he has constituted in relation to himself.[6]

To those who seek possession, Nietzsche issues a warning:

> [Man thinks] that in these quiet regions even the loudest surf turns into deathly quiet, and life itself is a dream about life. Yet! Yet! Noble enthusiast, even on the most beautiful sailboat there is noise, and unfortunately much small and petty noise. The most magical and powerful effect of woman is, in philosophical language, action at a distance, *actio in distans*; but this requires first of all and above all—*distance*. (1974, 124)

Possessing the image of woman as other to the self does not bring the omnipotence or self-completion promised. If woman was the complementary image man constructs, possessing this image would bring a kind of death to the self. It would efface the distance within the self necessary for self-overcoming.

While conformity relies on constituting and possessing an image of woman, under the pretense of autonomy, self-overcoming relies on maintaining a distance from this image. Leaving one's place behind requires sexual difference: a "noble" mode of valuation, a self giving itself, a spontaneous mode of self-affirmation "seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly" (Nietzsche 1969, 37). But in distancing himself from woman, the generous, creative man still incurs a debt to her. In the definition of active self-evaluation just given, Nietzsche implies an original distance between self and other. Yet as I have argued, he also acknowledges that even in creative self-fabrication the "pathos of distance" involved is located at "the origin of language itself as an expression of power" where the "noble" spirit names itself, gives itself identity and value "in contradistinction to all the low, low-minded, common, and plebian" (1969, 26). The distancing/differencing effected by will to power in self-overcoming materially constitutes woman as other to the aesthetic self. While the key to self-overcoming lies in maintaining this distance from the image of woman so constituted, something remains to be said about its effect on women.

Nietzsche not only claims that the creative man must distance himself from the image of woman he necessarily constitutes, he also claims that "woman forms herself according to this image" (1974, 126). This suggests that women are only artistic insofar as they are actors of a role imposed upon them. For women to be artistic in the proper sense would require the ability to overcome oneself according to one's own plan. This requires distance within the self between the present self and the concept or image toward which one aspires which, in turn, is predicated upon a distance between self and other.

In the extract given above from *The Gay Science,* there are two modes of self-constitution apparently open to women in relation to men: proximity, resulting from possession by a man, and action at a distance. The first, from a woman's perspective, requires her unconditional submission to the concept of unfathomable depth that man has of her. In obeying man in this way, women think, according to Nietzsche, that they will find "depth for their surface" (Nietzsche 1978, 67). But in submitting to men's needs, women reduce the distance between themselves and the other and hence the distance within themselves necessary for self-overcoming. Nor do they find depth for their surface. Like the actor, they reflect forms not their own, merely repeating themselves according to an image provided by others.

Submission results in the constitution of woman's bodily self as a calcified image of shame, calcified because submission collapses the difference between her appearance (surface effects of will to power which, to recall an earlier point, is the pathos "from which becoming and effecting first emerge") and the concept of unfathomable depth that man has of her (Nietzsche 1974, 125). Such a woman is the concept, the truth of woman, fetishized. Submission brings shame in two senses. It involves being sexually possessed by a man, and connected to this is the shame involved in the revelation through submission that woman is not the profound, unfathomable depth, the mysterious eternally feminine, which man's desire seeks. In submitting to man's desire, in giving up everything that she could be, woman's shame is constituted in revealing herself as surface (which is all there is to existence). The shame deals a double blow when, having accepted her gift, man loses interest. Again, to quote Nietzsche:

> There are noble women who are afflicted with a certain poverty of spirit, and they know no better way to *express* their deepest

> devotion than to offer their virtue and shame. They know nothing higher. Often this present is accepted without establishing as profound an obligation as the donors had assumed. A very melancholy story! (1974, 125)

The second mode of self-constitution that Nietzsche attributes to women is action at a distance. From a woman's point of view, this involves maintaining one's virtue where virtue means both distance from man's desire as well as maintaining one's difference (the image of her that man's desire constitutes). This woman maintains the appearance of being unfathomable depth over the shame of being a surface effect of will to power. Or, as Nietzsche puts it:

> [O]ld women are more skeptical in their most secret heart of hearts than any man: they consider the superficiality of existence its essence, and all virtue and profundity is to them merely a veil over this "truth," a very welcome veil over a pudendum—in other words, a matter of decency and shame, and no more than that. (1974, 125)

Action at a distance requires that woman maintain the profound image of difference that man has of her. Woman's virtue, her gift-giving virtue, is to not reveal this image as fraudulent, not to expose how man's desire, and so his self-overcoming, is dependent on this image. But the sexual "difference" so constituted is in accordance with a concept given by man. It is in man's interest, rather than woman's, that this distance, as antithetical "difference," is maintained.

Action at a distance, in "philosophical language" (as Nietzsche stresses), does not bring autonomy. Action at a distance is defined philosophically (in the language of Newtonian physics) as the idea that one body can affect another without any intervening mechanical link between them. The bodies are separated by empty space, yet when one moves so does the other. Woman is still moved by man's desire: a kind of mimicry is implied where woman is changeable, only to the extent that man's interpretations move her. This "action at a distance" does not distance woman from the other, nor does it allow the distance within herself necessary for her self-overcoming. In fact, the mimicry implied in woman's virtue of living up to the image

that man has of her is similar to Dionysian experience described by Nietzsche in the *Twilight of the Idols.* Here,

> the entire emotional system is alerted and intensified: so that it discharges all its powers of representation, imitation, transfiguration, transmutation, every kind of mimicry and play-acting, conjointly. The essential thing remains the facility of metamorphosis, the incapacity *not* to react (in a similar way to certain types of hysteric, who also assume *any* role at the slightest instigation). . . . [The Dionysian individual] enters into every skin, into every emotion; he is continually transforming himself. (Nietzsche 1968, 73)

This kind of changeability is creative, and Nietzsche explicitly ties it to a feminine disposition of dissatisfaction (1974, 98–99) and histrionics (317). But it is only a precondition to change. To be productive, the immediacy of mimicry must be offset by the distancing within the self necessary to stage and overcome the self. This distancing is the effect of the Apollinian world of images and language, that is, will to power as interpretation, where the self is constituted as separate from another. But, as I have argued, what woman becomes through this action at a distance is in accordance with a concept provided by man. So neither in submission to the democratic man nor at a distance from the artist do women embody the kind of aesthetics of self enjoyed by Nietzsche's "overman." Contrary to the assumptions of some postmodern aesthetics, it would seem that man's desire to create himself anew is satisfied only if woman remains in one place forever. Self-overcoming relies on woman giving herself on man's terms, a giving denied by any claims that self-overcoming is an autonomous project and a giving from which she does not benefit.

Nietzsche is not insensitive to the difficulties faced by woman as the object of man's desire. The imperative placed on women by men is to hold together a contradictory image of both virtue and shame, distance and submission, depth and surface. He claims that the comedy of love (1974, 125–26) and the impossibility of harmonious relations between the sexes (1969, 267) are based on the contradictory nature of man's self-constitution: the requirement of both distance and proximity in relation to the other. He also suggests that woman's skepticism, about her role in relation to man, and

in the assumption of an essential self, is founded on the impossibility of being the contradictory double image of virtue and shame that man requires. On the effect on women of this requirement, Nietzsche observes:

> Thus the psychic knot has been tied that may have no equal. Even the compassionate curiosity of the wisest student of humanity is inadequate for guessing how this or that woman manages to accommodate herself to this solution of the riddle, and to the riddle of a solution, and what dreadful, far-reaching suspicions must stir in her poor unhinged soul—and how the ultimate philosophy and skepsis of woman casts anchor at this point!
>
> Afterward, the same deep silence as before. Often a silence directed at herself, too. She closes her eyes to herself. (1974, 128)

OTHER PLACES FOR WOMEN

Woman's solution to the riddle of a femininity constructed by man is to "close her eyes to herself." This closing is an opening in its suggestion of other possibilities for self-formation aside from conforming to an impossible image of the feminine posited by men. Man's dependence upon women conforming to an image of the feminine, as well as other possibilities for women, is suggested by Nietzsche in the following passage:

> Would a woman be able to hold us (or, as they say, "enthrall" us) if we did not consider it quite possible that under certain circumstances she could wield a dagger (any kind of dagger) *against us?* Or against herself—which in certain cases would be a crueler revenge. (1974, 126)

As man's self-overcoming depends upon woman's conforming (whether in submission or at a distance) to an image of her that man has constituted for himself, then if woman does not conform to this image, she effectively wields a dagger against his notion of self. That woman can wield the dagger suggests the possibility of nonconformity, the possibility of artistry, the possibility of being-given that opens possibilities for her own existence.

Several modes of revenge are open to women, several ways of distancing themselves from the concept "woman" and recreating the self differently.

One possibility that Nietzsche mentions, in the context of woman closing her eyes to herself, is that she can find "atonement" for her honor through bearing children (1978, 66; 1969, 267; 1974, 128–29). However, as Alison Ainley suggests, Nietzsche tends to place a lower value on pregnancy in women than he does on the "spiritual" pregnancy of the overman (1988a).[7] A second mode of revenge is feminism of equality, but as my discussion above indicates, Nietzsche does not approve of this option: "equality" amounts to turning women into men and is therefore not a distancing at all.[8]

The possibility of woman's creativity comes uneasily from Nietzsche's uncertainty about distance. In submission or at a distance, woman is not what she promises to be or what man thinks she is ("even on the most beautiful sailboat there is a noise"). The metaphor of noise suggests that women exceed the concept "woman" that man posits. That women may change places rests on what Nietzsche means by noise, and this calls for a further reassessment of the notion of "distance" in his philosophy.

Jacques Derrida suggests, in his reading of Nietzsche, that perhaps woman is distance itself (1979, 49). Perhaps, but this needs qualification. Woman, operating at a distance, is the complementary image or the difference that man posits in constituting himself as present. But the "empty space" between them is effected by will to power as interpretation by which borders are established, bodies constituted, and identity and difference given. Distancing, will to power as the measurement of woman, is the difference that precedes, exceeds, and constitutes the distance within the self and between man and his "other" woman. Given the necessity of this other distancing, woman cannot be possessed—she exceeds the difference or distance over which man reaches for her or, more exactly, for himself. In proximity, or when possessed, woman will be noisy—there will be excess information. A woman is more than the concept that man has of her. Her truth or identity, and therefore his, is deferred and sexual difference, as distancing, is always already maintained.

If the truth of woman is to work for man, he must turn away from her—he cannot live with this concept, but he cannot live without it. But not only does the creative man turn away from the truth of woman that he has constituted, so does the creative woman ("she closes her eyes to herself"). Nietzsche says of truth as a woman: "Certainly she has not let herself be won" (1973, 13). Women do not become this essential image, even in submission. As Nietzsche puts it:

> Reflect on the whole history of women: do they not *have* to be first of all and above all else actresses? Listen to the physicians who have hypnotized women; finally, love them—let yourself be "hypnotized by them"! What is always the end result? That they "put on something" even when they take off everything.
>
> Woman is so artistic. (1974, 317)

Even when forming herself by submitting to the concept of "woman" that man projects, woman is acting as something other to both this concept and to herself.[9]

So woman's artistry lies in her power of dissimulation, and her power of dissimulation is based on the idea that, as absolute identity is always deferred, the uncovering of the veil that is the surface of woman reveals not the truth of woman nor therefore man's self-presence but further dissimulation. This "putting on something" even when they take off everything is not necessarily a deliberate resistance to subjection. It is a feature of intersubjective evaluation: "Around every profound spirit a mask is continually growing thanks to the constantly false . . . interpretations" (Nietzsche 1973, 51). Man's evaluation of woman, whether active or reactive, creates the mask that is woman's socially inscribed difference in relation to him. But the distancing and giving involved in the constitution of woman's difference in relation to man ensure that the distance between them cannot be effaced—something will always be "put on," which maintains a distance or difference. Men may assume that they can capture the dangerous plaything they need to discover the child in themselves (to create themselves anew), but the old woman's advice to these men is: "You are going to women? Do not forget the whip" (Nietzsche 1978, 67).

It is one thing to conclude that "woman" is distance (or distancing) and, therefore, that women do not coincide with either the surface as fetish or with the truth of woman beneath. It is another to suggest that the concept of woman that man forms for himself has no effect on women. Derrida, for example, following Nietzsche, appears to risk this conclusion:

> That which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth—feminine. This should not, however, be mistaken for a woman's femininity, for female sexuality, or for any other essentializing fetishes which might tantalize the dogmatic philosopher, the

> impotent artist, or the inexperienced seducer who has not yet escaped his foolish hopes for capture. (Derrida 1979, 55)

and,

> Because a "woman" takes so little interest in truth, because in fact she barely even believes in it, the truth as regards her, does not concern her in the least. It rather is the "man" who has decided to believe that this discourse on woman or truth might possibly be of any concern to her. (Derrida 1979, 63)

It is necessary to qualify Derrida's distinction between the "feminine" and an "essentializing fetish." Women may not coincide with either, but the distance/difference between female sexuality (the surface that is a woman at any particular moment) and the feminine (the undecidable concept of woman) is what constitutes women—at least insofar as women are artistic. Even in "overcoming" themselves, women rely on concepts that they have inherited, whether or not they may interpret these differently from men or differently from each other. Women are not outside nor completely inside the feminine as the truth of woman. But the truth of woman, as elusive and as changeable as it is, is a name, and as the opening discussion of the social constitution and normalization of the corporeal self suggests, "what things are called . . . gradually grows to be part of a thing and turns into its very body" (Nietzsche 1974, 121–22). Even if what things "are" can never be decided, concepts of "woman" have their material effects in the constitution of the "social structure of drives and emotions" that is a woman. Woman may not believe in man's discourse on her but, given the constitutive effects of this discourse on woman's difference, to imply, however carefully, that it does not concern her at all is a little hasty.

Nietzsche's understanding of the "pathos of distance" not only exposes that normative discourses assume a male subject but also that they rely on constructing woman in a certain way. Man creates an image of woman as other in order to secure his corporeal identity. At a distance, woman's "difference" is complementary and promises to affirm man's self-presence; in proximity, her "sameness" heralds the death of the self. There is no exchange between man and his creditor, woman. Rather, woman's "gift" to man is his (impossible) self-certainty; the "return" for her investment is a contradictory

corporeality—suspended between virtue and shame. Insofar as women fulfill this impossible role as man's other, they uneasily embody these contradictory concepts without a place of their own. But, as I have argued, the operation of will to power is such that the corporeal self that is a woman also remains open to possibilities aside from those that position her under man. The embodied meaning of "woman" is dispersed beyond virtue and shame, beyond the riddle of femininity that Nietzsche tends to uphold.

If there is a limitation in Nietzsche's approach to the problematic of the constitution of place, it is in the suggestion, apparent at times in his work, that an aesthetics of self can avoid incurring a debt to the other. This assumption is amplified in some postmodern claims that we can simply declare an end to self-identity and its attendant commodification and negation of the giving of others. To deny that an aesthetics of self involves the other is merely a disavowal of the giving of distance and, hence, of difference, involved in the constitution of one's embodied place in the world. As I have argued, Nietzsche's idea of the "pathos of distance" suggests the impossibility of such an uncontaminating space. Further, that action at a distance, in its simplest formulation, still relies on keeping woman in her place is testimony to the dangers lurking in any claims to the possibility of leaving one's place behind forever.