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Attunement

There was once a man; he had learned as a child that beautiful tale of how God tried Abraham, how he withstood the test, kept his faith and for the second time received a son against every expectation. . . . This man was no thinker, he felt no need to go further than faith. . . . This man was no learned exegete, he knew no Hebrew; had he known Hebrew then perhaps it might have been easy for him to understand the story of Abraham.

– Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

TEST PATTERN We do not always know how to calculate the importance of a work. In some cases, there is nothing even to guarantee that the work will arrive. Some works seem to set an ETA – there is a sense that it will take them years to make their arrangements, overcome the obstacles of an unprotected journey, get past the false reception desks blocking their paths. In the more assured and seductive version, these works follow the itinerary of Walter Benjamin’s secret rendezvous – targeting the “geheime Verabredung” that a work has made with the singularity of a destination: in the form, perhaps, of a future reader. The reader or receptor from the future assumes the responsibility of being addressed, of signing for the work when it finally arrives, helping it originate. Yet little tells us how many hits a work will have taken on its way or whether we will be there to receive it. Perhaps the work will be prevented from showing up at the appointed time. On the other hand, some works barrel toward their destination, causing a lot of trouble for a lot of Daseins. Heidegger once said that it can take two hundred years to undo the damage inflicted by certain works – I think he was evaluating Plato. For my part, I cannot tell whether the *Gay Science* has arrived or even, really, where it was going when Nietzsche sent it on its way. Still, I am prepared to sign for it. That is to say, I have prepared myself for it. I am not reluctant to assess the damage for which it still may be responsible – assuming the work has arrived and I can find its points of entry – or whether (but this is not a contradiction) this work has fashioned essential trajectories that provide

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existence with ever new supplies of meaning. I am using “work” here in the widest possible sense because Nietzsche – well, Nietzsche stood for the absence of the work.¹ He continues to pose the dilemma of the most unauthorized of authors – so many signatures, styles, shredders. Nonetheless, something keeps arriving and returning under that name, something that addresses us with uncommon urgency. So: *The Gay Science*.

To the extent that science is meant to promote life, Nietzsche makes it his business to put demands on its self-understanding. For Nietzsche, science – or, more to the point, the scientific interpretation of life – owes us an account of itself, if only to give us access to its overwhelming use of force over diverse discursive populations. It would not be stretching things too far to say that in Nietzsche’s estimation science needs to be audited at every turn, each year. The philosophical pressure is on for science to come clean, to declassify the language usage and rhetorical combinations that have supported the prodigal domination of science over other interpretive interventions and possible worlds. If Nietzsche wants to keep it clean, this in part is because he *needs* science in order to make some of his most radical claims. His relation to science is by no means driven by resentment but rests on appropriative affirmation. As with all appropriations, things can get rough at times. Yet it is from a place of exorbitant responsibility that Nietzsche writes up his version of science and, against the many pronounced inclinations of science, makes joyousness a new prerequisite of scientific endeavor. Not one to get tangled in obsolesced subjectivities, Nietzsche at times saw himself as a scientific object. Thus, in an effort to explain himself as a prophetic human being he writes: “I should have been at the electric exhibition in Paris” as an exhibit at the world’s science fair.² Elsewhere, as we know, Nietzsche comes out not so much as man but as dynamite. Taking these articulated mutations seriously – one of his masks will have been the scientific object – how can we make sense of Nietzsche’s call today?

He: desire TESTING . . . 1) If we are prepared only now to receive his version of the question concerning technology, this is because he ran it along the lines of a delay call forwarding system. He made us wait, holding back the scientific punch he wanted delivered. The call put out by Nietzsche remains the urgent question of a text that bears the burden of an enigmatic encounter with science. Nietzsche gives us science as an assignment, as a

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trust to be taken on unconditionally. Neither the first nor the last to make science part of an irrevocable curriculum, Nietzsche saw in science the potential for uncompromising honesty in terms of understanding who we are and what we can become. At this point, only the scientific interpretation of life is capable in principle of zapping those dubious mythologies and bad drugs that keep things hazy, enslaved, grimly pessimistic. On some level, science does not owe anything to anyone; it does not have to bend its rules to suit this or that transcendental power broker. In principle, science does not have to rhyme with nation-state or God but should be able to bypass the more provincial tollbooths of ever narrowing global highways. Science, if it wanted to do so, could, in principle, travel its zones with a free pass. More imposingly still, science could kick its way out of any religious holding pen and put down deadly fanaticisms in a flash of its idiomatic brilliance. In his rendering and genealogical breakdown, Nietzsche did not mean for science to become a servile instrument of a corporate state, though he saw how that could happen. But when Nietzsche takes on science, commanding its future – Nietzsche had first dibs on at least one or two of the possible futures allotted to the domains of science – he addresses the promise of science according to altogether singular categories, drawing up new amendments to its manifestly powerful constitution.

A peculiar feature in the legacy of *The Gay Science* lies in the fact that the *scientificity* of Nietzsche's use of "science" has stubbornly resisted a satisfying elucidation. This fact is not to be ascribed simply to some contingent prejudice in reading or to another, equally fugitive, form of blindness. If we have been unable comfortably to receive Nietzsche's word on the scientificity of science in contemporary terms, this may be so because his reach extends so far ahead of the limits of understanding that our scanners are eluded by it. In fact, Nietzsche's science has shaken off readers not only because of the unprecedented leaps and bounds on which his writing prides itself thematically, but also because of the strange terms of prediction that it posits, and which seem linked to whatever it is that Nietzsche means by *la gaya scienza*. In this context "gay," as Walter Kaufmann is careful to point out, does not necessarily mean "homosexual," though such rights of non-reproductive association by pleasure and thought pattern are certainly implied by the terms of the contract that Nietzsche draws up.³ What is a science that predicates itself on gaiety

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without losing its quality of being a science? And how does Nietzsche open the channels of a scientificity that, without compromising the rigor of inquiry, would allow for the inventiveness of science fiction, experimental art, social innovation, and, above all, a highly stylized existence?

If Nietzsche had discovered something like the essence of a future science, it may well be the case that it exposed itself to him in the way great discoveries are made, namely, when thought "catches it in flight without really knowing what it has caught."⁴ In other words, Nietzsche continually offers a model for cognition that cannot simply account for itself or maintain its results within the assumed certitudes of a controlled system of knowledge. At some level, the correlated acts of discovery and invention exceed the limits of what is knowable or even, as Jacques Derrida has argued, strictly recognizable.⁵ The meaning of scientificity that concerns Nietzsche, and that can be seen to dominate the technological field in which we moderns exist, embraces the qualities of both destructive and artistic modes of production, involving an ever elusive and yet at the same time tremendously potent force field. Our being has been modalized by the various technologies in ways that have begun fairly recently to receive serious attention in the domains of ontology, ethics, political theory, cybernetics, critical thought, and artificial intelligence. Yet what concerns Nietzsche belongs neither strictly inside nor outside any of these domains but has nonetheless infiltrated their very core – something, indeed, that Nietzsche's *Gay Sci* was first to articulate succinctly. Nietzsche variously motivates the scientific premise of his work by terms that indicate the activities of testing, which include experimentation, trial, hypothetical positing, retrial, and more testing. If anything, *Gay Sci* signals to us today the extent to which our rapport to the world has undergone considerable mutation by means of our adherence to the imperatives of testing. The consequences of this grid are considerable, involving, to say the least, our relation to explanatory and descriptive language, truth, conclusiveness, result, probability, process, identity. Testing, moreover, implies for Nietzsche very specific temporal inflections. Henceforth everything will have to stand the test of time, which is to say that, ever provisional, things as well as concepts must be tried and proven, and structurally regulated by the destruction of a hypothesis that holds them together. The logic of the living as much as the perspective of decline must go to trial. If it weren't too explosive, one could say that Nietzsche laid the fundamental groundwork for corroborating Karl Popper's theory of falsifiability.

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Nietzsche marvels at a science that, like a warrior, can go out and test itself repeatedly. If today's world is ruled conceptually by the primacy of testing – nuclear testing, drug testing, HIV, admissions, employment, pregnancy, SAT, GRE, MCAT, DNA, testing limits, testing a state's capacity for justice, as I just read in today's paper, and so on – then this growing dependency on the test is coextensive with Nietzsche's recognition of the modern experimental turn. The experimental turn, as we now know it from a history of flukes, successes, and near misses, in its genesis and orientation, travels way beyond good and evil. Its undocumented travel plan – there are so many secret destinations of which we remain ignorant – is perhaps why experimentation is a locus of tremendous ethical anxiety. No matter how controlled, we cannot know where it is going. Nietzsche acquires definition largely by the tests that he and his work have had to endure or, to put it more gaily, the experiments that they, in every possible (and impossible) walk of life and writing, have attempted. There is always the question of Nietzsche's scandalous itinerary, not the least stage of which entails his prediction that his name would one day be associated with the greatest catastrophe in history. What does this predictive utterance have to do with science? Nietzsche shows prediction to be responsible for its very essence, related as it is to the future, which science is always preparing.

Prediction, as a promise that can only ironize itself (only time will tell), is the genealogical test par excellence, linking futurity to language and its capacity to command the arrangements of a nearly magical authority. In this regard it is of some consequence that Nietzsche names in "Preludes of Science" the importance of magicians, astrologers, and witches – figures who created a taste and hunger for hidden, forbidden powers but who also make us recognize that "infinitely more had to be promised than could ever be fulfilled."⁶ Thus prediction and science, however occult their origins (and only a few things occupy more spooky premises than such futural ghosts as prophesy and invention), are rooted in the irony of promise. The noncoincidence of scientific promise and its fulfillment is what Nietzsche calls the Test.

Lest we succumb to the temptation of blinking Nietzsche into a magician, an astrologer, or a witch, we should remember that, while he was a strong medium, his feeling for the future, "a very powerful future feeling," is not simply that of a sorcerer's apprentice who may not appreciate the

Prediction
-
Future

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consequences of the suprahuman adventure. Nietzsche, on the contrary, communicates the solid concern of a knowing elder. He writes of himself, of his very powerful futural scanners, as “an heir with a sense of obligation, the most aristocratic of old nobles and at the same time the first of a new nobility – the like of which no age has yet seen or dreamed of . . . the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of humanity.”⁷ Describing his relation to science, Nietzsche taps a paradoxical feeling that includes both aristocratic obligation toward the future and the more American live-for-today spirit of experimentation. Both moments are tied for Nietzsche to a necessarily *prophetic* science. The prevailing mood of such a scientist is that of Dionysian pessimism, what Nietzsche calls the “pessimism of the future – for it comes! I see it coming!” The uncanny capacity for premonition and vision “belongs to me as inseparable from me, as my *proprium* and *ipsissimum*.”⁸ And so, in Book Five of *The Gay Science* Nietzsche prepares the ground for the new nobility of scientific responsiveness and, linking the two moments of the title, he explicates “the meaning of our cheerfulness” by situating “us” at our posts. In terms of the sequence of his argument, he, the last philosopher, locates the principal qualities of a gay science directly after the announcement of the greatest recent event – that God is dead, that the belief in the Christian God has proven unbelievable. By now the results are out: God indeed has failed the test; faith has been categorically undermined.

In God’s wake the prophet of gloom assumes his new responsibilities: “This long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending – who could guess enough of it today to be compelled to play the teacher and advance proclaimer of this monstrous logic of terror, the prophet of a gloom and an eclipse of the sun whose like has probably never yet occurred on earth?” The prophecy carried by Nietzsche’s language reads the gloom that awaits while evincing a tremor of amazement because the coast is now clear for his rising to meet the monstrous logic of terror. Science comes at a high price, for God’s failure leaves a bankrupt historical account. Correspondingly, the walled up stores of meaning that had held things together are bound to crumble. As premature birth of the coming century, Nietzsche carries himself over to a time of the ruptured horizon, proclaiming the end as an unprecedented opening. A rapture of fright rouses the lover of knowledge. Accepting a grimly provocative horizon in exchange for free rein, “we born guessers of riddles” throw open a scientific path:

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Even we born guessers of riddles who are, as it were, waiting on the mountains, posted between today and tomorrow, stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow, we firstlings and premature births of the coming century, to whom the shadows that must soon envelope Europe really should have appeared by now – why is it that even we look forward to the approaching gloom without any real sense of involvement and above all without any worry and fear for ourselves? . . . [O]ur heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again.⁹

"The Noon"

Premonition and freedom meet over the horizontal abyss, turning prediction toward a dangerous opening. The permit that has been issued at this precarious juncture is nothing less than a test driver's license. In a decidedly Kantian sense, freedom is viewed as a given and not something to be argued for or endlessly negotiated. Thus the Nietzschean horizon "appears free to us again" – freedom has been restored to the horizon. The disappearance or withholding of freedom is strictly illegitimate. Tell this to the judge. So the coast is clear, freedom restored, and a new license granted. If it had been revoked, Nietzsche suggests in another passage, this is due to the moral prejudice against science: the conspiracy against adventure and deregulated knowledge was imposed on us iconically by the couple, Faust and Mephistopheles – traitors to the cause of godless science.

It turns out that Faust was put on a short leash puppeteered in the end by God. Mephisto, deflated and castrated by the divine veto, loses all bets as well as his mortal lab. As it happens, God cannot tolerate the experiment or proof. Double-crossed, Mephisto in sum was made to function as an inhibitor to the scientific adventure, and his research on the creature, man, was terminated without due process. Nietzsche blows the whistle on the cosmic subterfuge. This thematic reproach represents one of the very few swipes that Nietzsche takes at Goethe. In terms of the aims he takes, it represents somewhat of a strange moment, for Nietzsche attacks the *literary* Goethe for a *scientific* error – Nietzsche tends to keep the accounts separate. At the same time, it could be argued that the secret hero of Nietzsche's scientific investigations is the Goethe of the *Theory of*

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Colors, whose bold experiments put the experimenter on the line. Goethe pioneered the moment when the body became the test site and not a secondary prop for a transcendentalizing consciousness. This is the Goethe that Nietzsche represses when he goes after the Goethe who produced the drama of *volte-face*, Faust's abrupt decathexis of science. In this case, Nietzsche shows little tolerance for Goethe's double entry accounts. But the history of Goethe's doublings and repressions, his Nietzschean mirrorings in art and science, his Freudian prophecies and Lacanian triggers, would take us far afield. Suffice it to say that Nietzsche monitored Goethe's scientific retreat in fiction with acute anxiety.



One could argue that, nowadays, since the fateful advent of the Gay Sci, but perhaps not solely because of it, there is nothing that is not tested or subject to testing. We exist under its sway, so much so that one could assert that technology has now transformed world into so many test sites. Let us set up this phase of our inquiry by discussing Nietzsche's unprecedented emphasis on experimentation, which is what I believe provides the crucial access code to the possibility of a gay science.

TESTING 1 . . . 2 . . . A vaguely threatening insinuation, the challenge sparked by the utterance, "Try me!" could come from any number of places. It could be the case that it speaks from the place of an action hero, a mundane bully, as a girl gang member, a new appliance, a car, or whomever your buffed up interlocutor might be today. In fact, when you hear someone say, "Try me!" it is very likely that he is speaking from the essence of technology – a shorthand formula intended to establish a tone of defiance, enjoining the other to test a limit. "Try me!" may challenge you to "see what happens" if the line is crossed. It also allows one to encounter the subject on a trial basis: there is something yet to be seen or recanted in the field of the encounter with the other. A call to test the space between us, "Try me!" however soon reverts to a faux experimental generosity. For while it gives the green light to go ahead and probe limits, it switches on the glare of a red light as well, protecting a designated turf. It does both at once, inviting an experimental advance and, intimating caution, averting its execution. One throws one's body in the way of an advance. Nietzsche's gesture moves the challenge in a different direction when he invokes, "Versuchen wir's." As if in response to the tapered challenge, his work often says "Let's try it" or "Let's try it out" – let us give it a

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try. Turning the trial into a gift, Nietzsche creates a space of recessive limits, at least when it comes to dogmatic assertions and cognitive boundaries. He makes his conditions known. In order to earn Nietzsche's praise, a given assertion must be trial-ready, inviting the type of responsiveness that allows for the experiment – what Nietzsche sees as a highly responsible stipulation and structure. Nietzsche, the thinker of the test site – from the selective test of the eternal return, to Zarathustra's trials, and the experimental language shots of the aphoristic texts – insisted on these very conditions. "Versuchen wir's!" circumscribes the space of an unceasing series of audacious experiments:

I favor any skepticism to which I may reply: "Let us try [versuchen] it!" But I no longer wish to hear anything of all those things and questions that do not permit any experiment . . . for there courage has lost its right.¹⁰

Under the flag of courage – his translation into scientific terms of Hölderlin's "Dichtermut" (poetic courage) – Nietzsche henceforth closes his ears to anything that disallows experimental probity. One could argue that, in *Human, All-Too-Human*, *Dawn*, and *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche sets up a lab in which he performs "the countless experiments on which later theories might be built."¹¹ Each aphorism is set up as an experiment to be tested, observed, and, where necessary, *rescinded*. Performing a kind of anti-sublation, rescindability becomes the true test of courage. Where Hegel might gather and hold in *Aufhebung*, Nietzsche, in and on principle, discards, lets go. His work depends on the bounce of rescindability, on the ability to mourn that which cannot prove or seriously legitimate itself. Such acts of letting go have nothing to do with wimping out or with the betrayal of what has been; instead, they provide a way of articulating an enhanced capacity to take the cuts of criticism, basing nothing on faith or mere durability. Letting go in this way indicates a mark of vitality that points to the minimally paranoiac path, if that should be conceivable, of scholarly pursuit. Show me scholars today who have the courage to see their little convictions put to the test! But scholars are cool with Nietzsche, so let me rescind. In fact, scholars unquestionably make the grade on this point, for they demand that prior training and discipline be proven to them – he calls it their unconditional probity. Scholars are battle-tested; they persistently shave down the lies, ruses, and falsifications that are strewn along their paths. Thus, "I bless you, my scholarly friends,"

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writes Nietzsche, performing a ritual politics of friendship. I bless you “even for your hunched backs. And for despising, as I do, the ‘men of letters’ and culture parasites. And for not knowing how to make a business of the spirit. And for having opinions that cannot be translated into financial values. . . . And because your sole aim is to become masters of your craft, with reverence for every kind of mastery and competence” and so forth.¹² This inventory of praise represents one of the rare passages in which Nietzsche acknowledges, with only some irony, the relative nobility of the scholar. This is because scholars are on the way to scientificity, that is, they require proof and have undergone the severe conditions of one intellectual boot camp or another.

Scholars, who, in principle, are not pretenders, are not in it for the money (in principle), and they deal with their bosses, the university and state, with some amount of defiance despite themselves. At least they are not simply writing “for” the university and teaching “for” the state, though they may be teaching in the institution and backing up state-run ideologies. If you are a scholar, enjoy this moment. It wraps up Nietzsche’s most positive evaluation of scholars, who are otherwise seen to be ossified in reactivity – they say “yes,” “no,” “yes,” “no” (usually “no,” moreover) to everything that is run by them. They are low-grade testers who are often called upon to give exams, conduct experiments, and come up with research results. Research, as Nietzsche hints and Blanchot, reading Nietzsche, avows, is a way of being in crisis: “All research is crisis. What is sought is nothing other than the turn of seeking, of research, that occasions this crisis: the critical turn.”¹³ Rather than closing in on itself, the critical turn of research opens itself up to the contingencies of discovery and to the dangers of nonresolution, interrupting any comfort zone toward which it may be lured, insistently prodded by the exigencies of further tryouts. The research crisis keeps reactive forces at bay.

In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche links testing to the becoming-active of forces. Active negation or active destruction describes the state of strong spirits; they destroy the reactive in themselves, submitting it to the test of the eternal return and “submitting themselves to this test even if it entails willing their own decline.”¹⁴ If Lou Salomé deposited the secret of the eternal return into the labyrinth of Nietzsche’s ear, as he more or less tells it – she has passed the paternity test, so it was beyond a doubt she who inseminated his ear – then Nietzsche carried the thought to term, receiv-

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ing the eternal return as a test to be tried and borne time and again, over and over again. What in the end was being tested when Nietzsche explicitly made Salomé the father of his thought?

The demands put to us by Nietzsche, in the form of the autobiographical traces as well as in the various deliveries of his thought, prompt a number of questions. Sometimes the questions that he makes us ask go to an “unthought” layer of the sketches he proposes, for as much as he thematizes it expressly he also appears to take testing’s pervasive pull for granted. This is why it becomes necessary to stay with the question and consistently go back to Nietzschean basics. What, finally, is the nature of the test? Does it have an essence? Is it pure relationality? How does it participate in Nietzsche’s great destabilizations or prompt the nihilistic slide of values? Why today is our sense of security – whether or not we are prepared to admit this – based on testability? We appear to *want* everyone and everything tested. (I am not unaware of the sinister resonance of this observation. But since when has a desire signaled by humanity not been pulled by a sinister undertow?) Testing, which our Daseins encounter every day in the multiplicity of forms already enumerated – ranging from IQ to cosmetics, engines, stress, and arms, testing 1, 2, 3 broadcast systems, not to mention testing your love, testing your friendship, testing my patience, in a word, testing the brakes – was located by Nietzsche mainly in the eternal joy of becoming. Becoming involves the affirmation of passing away and destroying – the decisive feature of a Dionysian philosophy. In the first place (but the place of testing still needs to be secured), testing marks an ever new relation among forces. Ceasing to raise to infinity or finitude, or to monitor time according to the pulse of German idealism, it imposes the course of unlimited finity. This is the temporality we now commonly associate with third-generation machines, cybernetics, and information technology. (In Deleuze’s work, unlimited finity is linked to the Superfold and indicates that a finite number of components yields a practically unlimited diversity of combinations; the equation in matters of testing between components and combinations is admittedly not as stable as Deleuze’s renderings suggest.)¹⁵ In a way, technology ensures its evolving perpetuation by quietly positing as its sole purpose an infinite series of testing events severed from any empirical function. Thus an elliptical circuit has been established between testing and the real: a circuit so radically installed – it is irreversible – cancels the essential difference

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between the test and what was assumed to be real.¹⁶ At this point – somewhere between Freud and Nietzsche – it is not so much the case that reality is being tested but that testing is constitutive of what can be designated, with the proper precautions, as real. The test is what allows for the emergence of a reality frame to assert itself. This relation of test to reality may have stood its ground since Parsifal. It is only since Nietzsche that we ask whether, as practice or object, the test discovers, exposes, establishes, or perhaps even *invents* the ground on which we walk the walk.

Testing, which we read as one of the prevailing figures of our modernity, still makes claims of absoluteness (something has been tested and proved; we have test results), but in the form of temporariness. It opens up the site that occurs, Nietzsche suggests, after Christianity has fizzled, arriving together with a crisis in the relationship of interpretation to experience. No longer is it a question of interpreting one's own experience as pious people have long enough interpreted theirs, namely, "as though it were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of the salvation of the soul – that is *all over* now." Now we godless ones test, we rigorously experiment. We are the Christian conscience translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience. Converted to scientificity, we still however carry a trace of Christianity because what triumphed over the Christian god was Christian morality itself, "the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously." As it became more refined, Christianity forced intellectual cleanliness upon us; it came clean by pushing science as the sublimation of its own murkiness. Now man's *conscience* is set against Christianity; it is "considered indecent and dishonest by every more refined conscience."¹⁷ The Christian god in sum split off from Christian morality, which necessarily went down a transvaluating path less traveled and turned against its recalcitrant origin. The truth march required Christian morality to give up the god. What interests me is the additional twist of transvaluation that Nietzsche's shadow history sketches, namely what occurs when the value urging truth converts into the currency of testing. Henceforth, in strictly Nietzschean terms, reactive positings will have to stand up to the scrutiny of recursive testing.

The experimental disposition, and the provisional logic of testing that evolves from it, occurs, in its technological sense, as an event, after the death of God. It does not arrive on the scene as a barbarian conqueror but modestly approaches, for it is at once more modest than anything Chris-

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tianity had proposed – proceeding, namely, by the modesty of hypotheses that are always overturnable – and decidedly more daring. This strain of modesty is shared by the spirit of audacity, wielding a strength capable of tremendous courage. It gathers its strength on mistrust. In the *Gay Sci Nietzsche*, posing as the Dionysian philosopher, writes, “the more mistrust, the more philosophy.”¹⁸ Mistrustworthiness is perfectly consistent with the exigencies of testing to the extent that, as stance or statement, it inhibits the potency of sentences that respond to whether something is merely true or false. Dionysian pessimism can be read along the lines proposed by Paul de Man in *Allegories of Reading*, where we are reminded that “a statement of distrust is neither true nor false: it is rather in the nature of a permanent hypothesis.”¹⁹ (The sensitive reader will have noted the slippage in English from “mistrust” to “distrust” which perhaps intones a lesser spark of gaiety.) Missed or dissed, trust is no longer placed in God but rests its case, if ever it should rest, on perpetual hypothetical postulating. In the modern sense, testing does not lean on the onto-theological notion of creation for its strength – even when the test creates nothing *ex nihilo*, it remains the *sine qua non* of any possible creation.

To be sure, testing did not emerge as an event one day; it did not arise cleanly from the ashes of a vital and present Judeo-Christian tradition but occupied a place prior to technological dominion. And so, God was always testing his nearest and dearest: Adam and Eve, Abraham, Job, Christ, and my mother were constantly being tested, and not all of them chose to remain mute about having their patience tried. But here’s the hitch prior to technotesting, and Kierkegaard provides the clue: “And yet Abraham was God’s chosen, and it was the Lord who put him to this test. All was now surely lost!”²⁰ Privileged and close enough to God to be worthy of the test, Abraham, for his part, must not know it is a test, for, among other considerations, such knowledge would eliminate the paradox of Abraham’s total faith in relation to God’s promise to him of a son. Abraham travels the ironic edges of promising, which can, as we know, in the end go either way. If Abraham had known it was a test, the answer would have been close at hand. God does not announce that “this is a test, this is *only* a test of the emergency broadcast system. If this were a real emergency . . .” until Abraham has passed it. Abraham cannot know until the test is over, which means that it was and was not a real emergency, but



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in any case becomes a test only after its aggressive question has been effectually answered.²¹ In the age of the technological dominion, we however think we know about the test and its consequences even where it holds us unconsciously. We are prepared for the test, even reduced to the test, to the degree that it is an extension of the cognitive horizon. Pretechnological traces indicate a different, at once more hidden and dramatic, rapport to the ordeal of testing. In the first place, they tell us that testing, a sacred assignment, bespeaks an incomparable closeness to the divine.

Though I am not yet widely recognized as a biblical scholar, even though I have proven definitively that Moses and Aaron were a telephone, I would venture to opine that Job, in the series of God's litmus tests, installs a different relation to God's testing service when he opens the possibility of infinite contestation. Where Abraham took the pose of absolute submission, Job modified the test grounds to yield a space of resistance. In terms of its fundamental structure, the test was henceforth thrown back on its own aptitude for inconclusiveness. The test was subjected to itself in contestation. Not a peep was heard from Abraham who suffered, arguably, only one test, while Job was made to face a battery of tests. Job brings a question to the test; he sees the test *as* question – as a questionable questioning, perhaps for the first time since that little girl was tempted by the apple. Job gives every indication of understanding that he is meant to do retakes, without knowing their putative purpose or how long the exam period will last. Ever since Job, the validity and necessity of testing will have been put into question. The Jobian moment, which rails at the test as an injurious breach of trust – to the extent that his book begins on a wager, he really is a pawn in the Game – returns evermore to haunt the test as an instance rejecting its very legitimacy. Every time a score, grade, or result is contested, every time a student, patient, or political activist walks into your office with a doubt, Job is there, showing up to undermine your hard-earned certitudes. What Job brings to the conversation is the possibility that the test which is meant essentially to accredit loyalty – or, in another idiom, faith – is, itself *a priori* a betrayal, its own delegitiminator.

To return momentarily to Abraham, I would be the last one to insist that the test needed to be taken only once, as repetition is inscribed in God's calling of Abraham – the name was called out twice, "Abraham! Abraham!" – and since, moreover, one cannot be sure of timetables when

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consulting the biblical itineraries, if the clock was set according to the New Testament, it could well be – though we have no corroboration of this hypothesis in the Scriptures – that Abraham was condemned to repeat the unique act of submission over and over again, much in the way that Christ keeps on dying. I must leave the passionate trials of Jesus of Nazareth to specialists of the New Testament, but I can see the merits of reading his question on the cross as an allegory of hermeneutic resistance, telling of his not understanding how he could have been failed. The narrative remains complicated, however, to the extent that, without a heads-up, doubt suddenly creeps in from both sides: the two poles determining the tester and tested collapse on the cross.²² Where He formerly deputized the demon to try Christ in the desert, God on the cross submits and splits Himself as Himself and Other to the terrible test, as his own son sacrificed who does not comprehend at the moment of sacrifice and, contesting, transcends the test within the test and yet must necessarily fail the test in order to pass on – or not, depending on whether the dialectic kicks in, letting the infinite take over so that no one is in a position to judge the results, not even the infinite become finite, because the moment of uncertainty is henceforth inerascable, and you know what I mean. Let us now pull away from the sacred inventory of trials and from the requirements that served to mark the exalted status of the one chosen for testing.

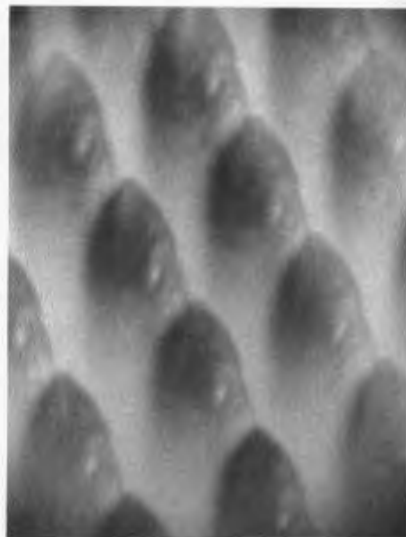
With the spread of technology, testing lost some of its auratic and exceptional qualities and started hitting everyone with its demands, that is, anyone who wanted to gain admission anywhere, and all institutions started testing to let you in and let you out. If something weird happens, you are taken in for psychiatric testing. Technological warfare belongs to the domain of testing as well and does much to support the thesis that there is little difference between testing and the real thing. To the extent that testing counts as warfare today, it marks the steady elimination of boundaries between weapons testing and their deployment. The test already functions as a signal to the enemy other. What this means, among other things, is that the Cold War *was* a war. It also means that George W. Bush could at once invoke and scramble these codes by announcing, on 9/11, that the attack on the World Trade Center was, in his words, a test: “This was a test” were his first words hours after the attack in 2001. “The resolve of our great nation is being tested,” he proclaimed. Since this administration has repeatedly shown signs of being subjugated to the dic-

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tion of testing, it seems worthwhile to linger in the district of its utterances to examine how George W. Bush's language usage works here. Appearing to introduce a new rhetoric of justification for imminent military action, the president in fact reverts to a citation of pretechnological syntagmas. His diction counts on the auratic pull of the test. In this context the term sparkles as an anointment; the president bears the mark of election by virtue of the test. If a few months earlier he had been elected by dubious political means, he is now elected by divine mandate to meet the demands of a terrific test in order to create history, which he begins to do by reviving the crusades. Saying that the terror attack was a test, President Bush leaves no room for the undecidability of Abraham, the contestability of Job, or the intricately martyred Christ. Disturbing the codified usage of the trial to which "the test" alludes, the utterance subverts the condition of being tested by offering that, at the moment of its mention, the test has been passed. The test will already have made sense and turned in the result: one would not have been chosen to withstand it, the logic goes, if one had not *already passed* the test of history countersigned, in this case, by God.

Reinscribing and repeating the wars of his father, this little Isaac jumps at the chance to return to traumatic sites. Like Isaac, neutralized and silenced by the father's package deal with the sacred, this one wants to dig into the earth, signing a legacy to which he was and was not called. Part of the "vision thing" that we call testing, the first Gulf War was conducted primarily as a field test; but it also, phantasmically, displayed the characteristics of a national AIDS test in which the United States scored HIV-negative, owing to the "bloodless" and safe war.²³ The Gulf War set out to prove the hypothesis that no technology will ever exist without being tested; but once it is tested, we are no longer simply talking about a test.²⁴ Nothing will be invented, no matter how stealth, nuclear, or "unthinkable," that will not be tested, that is, at some level of calibration, realized. Hence, in addition to related issues of deployment, testing is always written into treaties. The necessity of treaties, conventions, and regulative discourses in itself underscores, in the manner demonstrated by Kant and Benjamin in their critiques of violence, the extent to which testing, like war, has become naturalized, and can be only provisionally suspended by treaties that try to ban them.





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The relation of testing to the question of place is essential. The test site, as protoreal, marks out a primary atopolis, producing a “place” where the real awaits confirmation. Until now the test site has not been constructed as a home (unless you’re a homunculus). Linked to a kind of ghostless futurity, the site offers no present shelter. This explains perhaps why Nietzsche names the *gaya scienza* in the same breath that convokes “*We who are homeless.*” But Nietzsche being Nietzsche knows how to affirm the unhinging of home as the preparation for another future, one not rooted in ideologies of the home front: “We children of the future, how *could* we be at home in this today . . . in this fragile, broken time of transition?”²⁵ The work, his experimental language lab, restlessly communicates with a future that it attempts to conjure. Let me pause this for a second where Nietzsche skips a beat. His forward rush can be consternating at times, breaking the rhythm of a carefully trained transition. The drive toward the future is something that still needs to be questioned in Nietzsche, for at moments such as these, he appears to put himself on fast forward, betraying his less *allegro*-minded thinking of the *trans*. When Nietzsche sporadically averts his text from the lacerations of the day, the somewhat romantic lament of present destitution comes each time as a jolt. We know that an aspect of the eternal return is meant to repair time and even to appease the revenge of the “it was”; yet Nietzsche is also the hero of the transition, persistently marking off the fragile, broken spaces of a difficult today from which he *screams*, as Heidegger says, cranking up the volume. Nietzsche endured the necessity of having to scream to be heard and knew how to dwell in the hollow time of transition. The way he gets away with the double temporal entry is to figure himself as double, precisely: Although this passage seems to ride on an excess of futurity, the rejection of the today, its pink slip, is served by a pregnant Nietzsche who is carrying a new life, carrying himself to term as a child of the future. Nietzsche is fused to that which he carries and will leave him behind. When he dismantles the home front, unsettling what seems to be settled, he does so in the same gesture that returns on his birthday at the opening of *Ecce Homo*—he clears away what has already fallen off, decayed; he sets aside what has been destroyed so that life can see the light of day. Nietzsche wants to know if he can build a new home without the foundations that Heidegger and others will lay. Will it be possible to establish residence without the grave ideologies of ground and dwelling weighing him down?

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For Nietzsche there is a good homelessness (the deracination accompanied by abundance, the nomadic drift) and a bad homelessness (burdened, destitute, chronically fatigued with the earth, a homelessness of depletion). The logic of the test site that we have not yet understood concerns precisely the relation of the site to *life*; we still know only how to leave the test site uninhabitable, mapping ever more deserts as eco wasteland, unexploded arsenal, littered terrain, concentration camp laboratories, the so-called third world. The question that Nietzsche presses us on is therefore never merely one of affirming homelessness after metaphysics, but of rendering spaces habitable, multiplying trajectories for life and the living, refiguring the site of experimentation in such a way as to ensure that it is not already the ensepulchered reserve of the living dead. In other words: why have we not yet thought the test site on the side of life? It is important to note that Nietzsche is not, in this phase of this thought, the exuberant adolescent of old. The Nietzsche who thinks the experiment has come back from the dead several times over: he is formulating his theory of the great health; he has returned once again to health and, like a great convalescent, looks at life with a somewhat ghostly air that dissolves only gradually. Still, he is on the move again, and homelessness becomes an expression of renewed *vitality*, the overcoming of sterile destitution.

The homelessness that Nietzsche posits is never simply reactive, therefore, but puts up a bold front as it looks toward the future. Among its prominent features the abomination of racism, an aggravated narcissism, ranks high. At moments it resembles the crew of *Star Trek*, "we who are homeless are too manifold and mixed racially and in our descent . . . do not feel tempted to participate in the mendacious racial self-admiration and racial indecency." Racial indecency is, Nietzsche suggests everywhere, the absence of test. It is the untested presumption par excellence, held together by pseudo-precepts that would never hold scientific sway. Racial indecency and self-admiration go steadily together, for one feeds the other while expunging otherness and refusing the movement of self-overcoming, which is to say, ceaseless self-correction. Nietzsche, however, is by no means setting up a political correctional facility, an alternative space for human subjects weighted down by punishing chains. Something has to give, liberating the heaviness that paralyzes the movement of racial justice, which serves as the earth-toned metonymy for all possible

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justice. “The ‘wanderer’ speaks” speaks out on the prospective aims one takes. To be capable of a long-distance will to knowledge one must consistently lighten up:

One has to be very light to drive one’s will to knowledge into such a distance and, as it were, beyond one’s time. . . . One must have liberated oneself from many things that oppress, inhibit, hold down, and make heavy precisely us Europeans today. The human being of such a beyond who wants to behold the supreme measures of value of his time must first of all “overcome” this time in himself – this is the test of his strength.²⁶

Nietzsche adds to the internal conversion mechanism a function to stabilize one’s aversion to the present, stating that one must overcome not only one’s time “but also his prior aversion and contradiction against this time, his suffering from this time, his un-timeliness, his *romanticism*.”²⁷ One has to stay in place while training for the future: we first have to lose some weight. To be capable of being sent off to meet our beyond, we would have to recognize, as Nietzsche does at the end of Book Two, that “we are at bottom grave and serious human beings – really, more weights than human beings.” Few of the training sessions take place at home or at the estates of human dignity. In order to prepare oneself for takeoff, one needs to have gotten over oneself, that is, one needs at times to see oneself as dunce (“nothing does us as much good as a *fool’s cap*: we need it in relation to ourselves”). At times we need a rest from ourselves, says Nietzsche, turning sharply into an obligatory bend: “We must discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge; we must occasionally find pleasure in our folly, or we cannot continue to find pleasure in our wisdom.”²⁸ The dumb interiors of the creature, man, will provide a respite from the heavyweight champions of self that lean on us, draining all passion from genuine knowledge-questing. Knowledge requires the pleasure of folly, something that art, which only flirts with cognition, often helps us acquire. Yet Nietzsche does not set limits on folly, nor does he interrogate the prickly parameters of pleasure here. Like pleasure, folly can go too far afield, disrupting itself in the restricted area of a “stupid mistake,” a risk poorly taken. In the end, though, the humbling trip-up is what sends us on our way en route to endless tryouts in an effort to create a place on and, above all, off the maps of cognition.

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Destiny and destination take on altogether different contours when prepped by the twin passions of testing. In order to take ourselves seriously we must get over ourselves, we must don the fool's helmet. The fool fuels the heroic passion of knowing, switching at the controls into something other than itself. Both fool and hero assure the relative stability of the test site, their home away from home. A mark of the beyond, or of sending and *envoi*, the test site is a homestead of being-not-at-home, whether this be figured as the desert of nuclear testing, a constellation of the underground, in the lab or, as Nietzsche has it, very happily far away – at a remove from the fatherland, perhaps in Italy, where experimental life can be affirmed. Having introduced it firmly and staked his philosophical prestige on its unpreventable unfolding, what does Nietzsche say about the age of the experiment?

The capacity to experiment, as well as its considerable implications, is clearly something of a gift for Nietzsche. This is why Nietzsche cannot stop expressing his gratitude for the dangerously changing aspect of its corollary, the great health (there are a number of healths, and their routines often take you under). The possibility of experimentation, the kind that urges the testing of your strength over and over again, presupposes that a gift has been given to which Nietzsche in turn gives his work, offering, despite everything, his gratitude to what has been offered him. The gift of starting more or less from scratch, outfitted only with a new mistrust, grants a thinker the free rein necessary for closing the deal and opening the field of a nonresentimental regard for one's task; it affirms time and again that one is free to let go of the very gift that has granted the work. Such rights of embrace and dismissal establish a relation to the work that Nietzsche is not loath to associate with great love. In a sense he needs to get love in there in order to create the possibilities for a type of moral generosity that does not wither into stone-cold obligation. In the section "Against Remorse," Nietzsche outlines a moral code, without imperative, honored by a thinker who exists in the noncontradictory space where action, freedom, and noble sensibility inflect thought: "– A thinker sees his own actions as experiments and questions – as attempts to find out something. Success and failure are for him *answers* above all. To be annoyed or feel remorse because something goes wrong – that he leaves to those who act because they have received orders and who have to reckon with a beating when his lordship is not satisfied with the result."²⁹

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Nietzsche assimilates experiments and questions to the *action* of the thinker who, no longer caught in the falsely construed Hamletian dichotomies of thought and action, sees such action thoughts freed up from the dependencies of stipulated results. The experiment implies, among other things, tenure, freedom, a nobility of taste.

"RESULTS"

Let us lay down another track to complement the gift of experimental action. It circuits the relatedness of experiment to Nietzschean gratitude, as it is expressed throughout the *Gay Sci*, through the question of taste that he links consistently to experiment. Encouraging the affinities of testing and tasting, Nietzsche turns every test into something of a taste test. The relation of the test to taste is crucial. In a sense, this relation keeps the senses busy, involving instincts that otherwise might be dulled or deadened. Keeping the body intact and thinking tactile, Nietzsche develops an experimental ethos, a modified judgment of taste. The experience of freedom with which Nietzsche associates genuine experimenting has a double legacy. On the one hand, he sees freedom in science as relatively absolute, if one could say so: the experiment answers to no one. Nietzsche's thinking passes over sanctioned figures of authority to which a thinker might be answerable. On the other hand, he does not simply bypass answerability as such but gives the problem its own domain by projecting the ways in which the address of answerability will prompt the most serious ethical questions of the future. To whom are we answerable? Nietzsche appears to make it a matter of "whom" rather than "what," a decision that in itself denotes ethical resolve. Turning aside from essence as its destination or agency, answerability, embedded in procedure, intention, or method, always implies the future of the experiment and something like the "personality" with which it is associated or to whom it is addressed. The notion of personality tends to recede in matters of strict accountability. In recent times themes of answerability organize the way we think about experimentation and testing from the relative innocence, it was thought, of the experiments in free love to the genome project or animal testing. It has become clear that every form of testing is open to ethical anxiety and, in many areas, has contributed significantly to the resurgence of ethics. The ethical perspective still remains, in Nietzsche's sense, a question of personal taste. Decency and even justice, for Nietzsche, are largely matters of taste. (Nietzsche's example goes like this: I would rather be robbed than see a homeless person suffer. This is a matter

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of taste.) Pulling away from the duty-bound authorizations of Kantian ethics, Nietzsche stakes justice on the no doubt equally precarious discernment of taste. According to the Nietzschean scale of things, taste, which accepts or rejects by virtue of the noble instinct, keeps ethics alive and on the side of life, away from numbing universalizations.

Testing and experimentation, related inextricably to acts of negating and affirmation, are conducted in the name of life; for the seeker of knowledge, moreover, they name the most exalted way of experiencing life. Selective testing comes with the eternal return, which is to say that it must overcome a first level of hesitation, difficulty. Ceding to difficult ground – and having difficulty with its own grounding – selective testing cannot amount to some naïve and spontaneous expression of a zest for life. It is preceded by a halt, a retreat. Thus Nietzsche's rhetorical embrace of the complicity of life and experiment comes by way of the negative and must continue to make its path through a number of "nots": "No, life has not disappointed me [after a long period of illness]. The great liberator came to me: the idea that life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge – and not a duty, a calamity, not trickery. – And knowledge itself: let it be something else for others; for example, a bed to rest on, or the way to such a bed, or a diversion or a form of leisure – for me it is a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings, too, find places to dance and play. – '*Life as a means for knowledge*' – with this principle in one's heart one can live not only boldly but even gaily, and laugh gaily, too."³⁰ That life could be an experiment betokens a gift of great liberation; that is why it gets named together with the entitling instance of the Gay Sci in the double affirmation of "gaily," offering nuance to life, allowing it to live itself boldly, dancingly. Having traversed the reign of the "not" – "not a duty," "not trickery" – life embraced as experiment has been able to cut loose the dangerous undertow that leaves one wiped out, in need of "a bed to rest on." One has the sense that here, as elsewhere, Nietzsche maneuvers between two valuations of a decisive term: there can be a good and bad boldness, one type of which is adopted in good faith and health, and the other in service of sinister ends.

In the absence of a transcendental seal, philosophy and science turn to other qualities to clear their paths and warrant their integrity. Nietzsche has to steer between God and ego to keep thinking clean – too much God or too much ego is destructive of the scientific aim, and liable only to

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produce catastrophic imaginary or narcissistically warped aberrations. In any case, God rarely dispenses permits for scientific adventure, though philosophy has been known to suck up to any power of historical moment. To keep thinking on track, Nietzsche mobilizes love and personality. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly for us moderns today, who associate experiment with some degree of desubjectivation, the experimental imagination, as Nietzsche calls it at one point, implies a strong personality. It was Friedrich Schelling who once remarked that the question of personality was egregiously left out of the philosophical field. Nietzsche, who involves biographemes in the index of philosophical demands, skims off a notion of personality to make his argument, such as it is, stick. The lack of personality always takes its revenge, Nietzsche writes in "Morality as a Problem":

A weakened, thin, extinguished personality that denies itself is no longer fit for anything good – least of all for philosophy. All great problems demand great love, and of that only strong, round, secure spirits who have a firm grip on themselves are capable. It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an "impersonal" one, meaning that he can do no better than to touch them and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought.³¹

Part of a lover's discourse and a destinal commitment, the Nietzschean motif of the strong personality determines the sturdiness of thought. One enters into a relationship with those problems that solicit urgent attention. One's distress and happiness abide in the enrapturing movement of their idioms and silences. The sustained engagement with problems cannot be put into the hands of those who have excused themselves from the space of a vital encounter by means of ascetic subtractions or anemic inquiry. Nietzschean science scorns cold objectivist observation and limp grapples, requiring instead something on the order of an affective self-deposit and intense commitment. Prompting the encounter of great problems with great love, scientific curiosity and experimental imagination trace their novel routes. Nietzsche appears to envision a mapping of scientific study that is auratically pulled together by the love borne by a strong personality; buoyed by love, such a science could not degenerate in principle to a hate crime against humanity. Yet the borders separating

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love from hatred are left untouched by Nietzsche: he does not consider the cold prompters of love or the ambivalent underworld of acts of love in world or science. He leaves aside the possibility that the most hateful turn is often fueled by love of a nameable cause or country.

When Nietzsche installs love as a motor force behind the scientific urge, he does so to open the scene for an unprecedented generosity of being capable of melting the moral ice age and a history of intellectual arrests; until now, knowledge has been deterred from supporting the limber stretch exercises of human beings. To this end, love supplants the deep freeze of moral valuations, rendering the scientific pursuit on a par with what is felt to be irresistible. Why is it, Nietzsche asks in this section, that "I see nobody who ventured a *critique* of moral valuations; I miss even the slightest attempts of scientific curiosity, of the refined, experimental imagination of psychologists and historians that readily anticipates a problem and catches it in flight without quite knowing what it has caught."³² Disposed by great love to devoted study, the experimental imagination does not settle on one object or line of inquiry but, as part of Nietzsche's vocabulary of *force*, it tends to shift ground and change objects with a sometimes alarming degree of regularity. In fact, love, to be true to itself, has to carry the fissuring break within its travels. It cannot be otherwise if it is to follow the itinerary set by the laws of becoming.

The experimental imagination is exceptional in several ways. Taking risks but also exercising prudence – practicing, in Nietzsche's famous sense, the art of living dangerously – the experimental cast of being does not so much preview the advent of a technobody (equipped with the antennae of cold, curious thought) but, in the first place, reflects a vitality that disrupts sedimented concepts and social values. Such a force of disruption goes against the grain of what has been understood as praiseworthy. Promoting meanings that have been left in cold storage for centuries, society values unchangeability and dependability. It rewards the instrumental nature (the character of dependable, computable qualities, i.e., someone you can count on) with a good reputation. On the other hand, efforts involving self-transformation and relearning, acts that make oneself somewhat unpredictable in this regard, are consistently devalued: "However great the advantages of this thinking may be elsewhere, for the search after knowledge no general judgment could be more harmful, for precisely the good will of those who seek knowledge to declare themselves

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at any time dauntlessly *against* their previous opinions and to mistrust everything that wishes to become *firm* in us is thus condemned and brought into ill repute. Being at odds with a 'firm reputation,' the attitude of those who seek knowledge is considered *dishonorable* while the petrification of opinions is accorded a monopoly on honor! Under the spell of such notions we have to live to this day."³³ While science itself was seen to count on the strength of prediction, the scientific personality needs to evade the temptation of predictability. Prediction should not be ruled by an internal dictator or dictionary of obligations. If one stayed in one's assigned grooves, everything would harden into place, with no suppleness to assure necessary shifts and turnarounds. In addition to petrification, one also always risks softening, effeminating, so to speak. Yet if Nietzsche had to choose or lose, he would promote something that comes close to the texture of the softening that opens and glides, allowing for sudden shocks and slippages. The scientific personality, spurred on by love, needs to be able to flow in order to move past anything that establishes itself firmly. The surge vitality provided by love drives the experimental disposition beyond its assumed goals.

Submitted to constant critique and revision, the experimental disposition is capable of leaving any conclusion in the dust when it obsolesces, turns against itself, or proves decadent; when a result is "arrived" at, the experimental imagination suspends it in its provisional pose of hypothesis. The hypothetical statement submitted to critique does not belong to a class of positivistic certainties or objective observations, since it is never loosened from the affect that brought it into view. A truth or probability was, Nietzsche stresses, formerly loved. The scientific imagination cathects on the hypothesis and itself becomes different as the "object" changes. While it seems as though reason prompts a process of deca-thesis, it is in fact life and its production of needs that is responsible for criticism and revision. Thus "In Favor of Criticism" states the following:

Now something that you formerly loved as truth or probability strikes you as an error; you shed it and fancy that this represents a victory for your reason. But perhaps this error was as necessary for you then, when you were still a different person – you are always a different person – as are all your present "truths," being a skin, as it were, that concealed and covered a great deal that you were not yet permitted to see. What killed that opinion for you was your new life and not your reason: you no

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longer need it. . . . When we criticize something, this is no arbitrary and impersonal event; it is, at very least very often, evidence of vital energies in us that are growing and shedding skin. We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm – something in us that we do not know or see as yet. – This is said in favor of criticism.³⁴

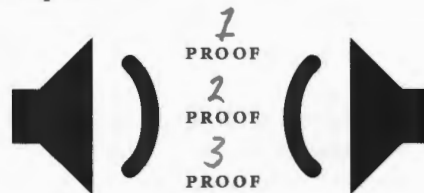
Not reason but life requires the serial proliferation of amendments and retractions, burying dead opinions and promoting the growth of new critical needs. To the extent that the personality triggers truth and guns for error, there will be no standstill or momentous revelation that can claim eternity as its backdrop. Every collaboration of truth and error is determined by the wide-ranging difference over time of the personality to itself. And even where a former truth must now be discarded, Nietzsche, ever mindful of resentful potentialities, reminds us that it was once loved and urgently needed by a personality that consistently outgrows itself. The experimental disposition is thus somewhat on the run, whether passing through non-knowledge, and catching the unknowable in the outfield of inquiry, or because something within us compels negation and further negation as a condition for living and affirming. Unknowable, and as yet unseen, something within us could come from the future or return from a subterranean layer of past inscriptions. Still or no longer human, we – or rather “you,” Nietzsche says “you” – are molting, shedding skin like so many truths cast off by *The Gay Science*. Your body transforms, engineering a new era of sacrifice. During a related but more anthropological sweep, Foucault once saw things moving in the direction of epistemic sacrifice: “Where religion once demanded the sacrifice of bodies,” he writes, “knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves, calls us to the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge.”³⁵

TESTING ◀1 . . . ▶▶2 . . . ▶▶▶3 . . . Much has been said about Nietzsche’s statement that we need only to invent new names in order to create new “things.” In that famous aphorism, however, he adds to the list of power switches the notion of probabilities: “We can destroy only as creators – But let us not forget *this* either: it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long run new ‘things.’”³⁶ In the long run, probabilities and estimations weigh in as importantly as names when it comes to invention’s power over new things. Nietzsche places things within quotation marks, which in this case ex-

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pands rather than contracts the cited domain: in place of limiting himself to substantial objects, he leaves open the definition of what can be expected to come from the creation of new probabilities, names, or estimations. In the passage discussed above, Nietzsche puts probability on the same level as truth. Both truth and probability are linked to love, which furtively documents the affective holdings of the gay scientist. The point to be held on to at this juncture, beyond the tempting psychologization of both terms, is the way Nietzsche smuggles probability into the neighborhood of truth in order to assert its rights of equal residency: "You shed formerly loved truth or probability."³⁷

But before continuing to explore the itinerary of the experimental disposition in the Gay Sci, I would like to connect the questions that have been raised to a number of insistent contemporary claims. It is not that I want to trace some loveless relations to truth and probability but, in order to see the genuine innovation of Nietzsche's scientific incursion, I find it necessary to change channels and skip a century, to fast forward to where Nietzsche is used and betrayed. This commercial break will allow us to reenergize the reading of Gay Sci with a graft from its own future passageways. If the Gay Sci has sought us out and is meant to speak to us today, then it will have had to stand the test of time, which does not limit the text to a vulgar little quiz involving applicability and whether or not one "buys it," but is disclosive of the way in which the Nietzschean insight relates to itself as its own future, its own labor and announced commitments. I will let it recharge itself as we borrow from the future of Gay Sci in order to read its past.



a) In a work linking philosophy with the conceptions and technologies of artificial intelligence (AI), a concerned editor outlines the way in which AI researchers "have recently found themselves writing, without any conscious intent, what philosophers recognize as philosophy."³⁸ The true source of apprehension, expressed in the introductory phase of the vol-

ume, may involve another dilemma, effected “without any conscious intent,” reflected namely in the section title, “How Philosophers Drift into Artificial Intelligence.” Despite considerable emphasis on drifting, randomization, fuzziness, and interference, the work signals its anxiety over philosophy’s nearly random drift into the new territory. The unwarranted interference risks subverting coherent programming and blunting the concerted demand for rigor upon which AI discussions appear to be based. The origin of the demand for rigor, which has conditioned twentieth-century Anglo philosophy, “is the positivist’s requirement that theories be testable. At the very least, a respectable philosophical theory should be stated with sufficient precision that one can tell what it says about *something* and whether its predictions about that subject matter are borne out.” The minimal requirement of rigor meant that “respectable philosophy” (respectable is repeated a number of times) had to be capable of being articulated in the formalism of logic: “As time passed, however, the awareness grew that formal rigor was not sufficient to guarantee unambiguous content or to ensure sufficient philosophical clarity to meet even this minimal criterion of testability. . . . There must be more to philosophical analysis than logical formalism.”³⁹

The migration of philosophy into areas that are technologically fitted risks deflating the rigor on which so much is staked. It is as if rigor maintains the phallus that assures the rule and proper place of “respectable philosophy.” Yet there is danger ahead in the form of disrespect for completion and clarity, the handmaidens of rigor. In some cases contemporary philosophers have been led “to eschew rigor altogether. Even in investigations shrouded in a façade of formalism, there is often a lamentable tendency toward handwaving when the going gets difficult. The trend is toward painting pictures rather than constructing detailed theories. Perhaps most contemporary philosophy is too vague and unfinished to satisfy even a minimal requirement of testability.”⁴⁰ Testability furnishes the uninterrogated core of rigor. It puts out the call for a new mode of thinking that could be aligned with the demand for rigor, which remains equally uninterrogated but seems to be linked to a notion of computational realizability: “To some of us, the concepts and technology of artificial intelligence provide at least a partial resolution of the problem of ensuring at least some degree of testability. As Paul Thagard (1988) has pointed out, artificial intelligence liberates us from the narrow con-

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straints of standard logic by enforcing rigor in a different way, namely via the constraint of computational realizability."⁴¹ This example is especially useful to us because it shows how "rigor" enables the displacement of truth by testability.

Computational realizability is no guarantee of truth or of explanatory interest, of course, but it does guarantee a certain kind of rigor. Those philosophers who have begun to test their theories by trying actually to implement them in computer programs have found that the discipline required almost invariably reveals ambiguity, vagueness, incompleteness and downright error in places where traditional philosophical reflection was downright blind. . . . Furthermore, a running implementation of a theory makes it possible to apply the theory to more complicated test cases than would be possible by armchair reflection, and experience indicates that this usually reveals counterexamples that would not otherwise have been apparent.⁴²

Endorsed by "experience," acts of reflection are devalued and overthrown for the asserted virtues of implementation. The linchpin of this operation, "rigor," enters the picture unrigorously, however, as only "a certain kind of rigor." What kind of rigor is a certain kind of rigor? What does it mean to "guarantee" a certain kind of rigor? In short, what is being *guaranteed* if not the ability itself to guarantee where truth has been weakened or explanatory interest diffused? Everything rests on the promise of a certain kind of rigor. But at what price is this flimsy ground constructed? All such great white Anglo hope for philosophy can be maintained as long as foreign invasions by ambiguity, aleatory eruptions, incompleteness, and other forms of parasitism are revalued. This sort of revaluation or indeed repression belongs to a "respectable philosophy" even as it loses ground with respect to the aforementioned rigor. Importantly, the test is posited on the side of a cleaner, more rigorous, unassailable cognitive value. Testing in itself is never questioned but posed, necessarily, if the argument is to work, as the infallible ground for yielding determinations and often indulging the metaphysical fantasy of completion.

But what if testing were from the start itself built upon notions of constitutive incompleteness, ambiguity, blind runs, and radically provisional cognitive values? In order to carry on the respectable colonization of discourse of which philosophy, that certain kind of something which drifts

into AI, would be the unconscious, it is essential at once to rely on the test and to leave its premises untested – as if the test could provide an unquestionably solid ground for overtaking reflection and other philosophically triggered interferences. When promoting AI as the advanced frontier for philosophy, the introduction slips in a “partial” guarantee: “A (partial) guarantee of philosophical rigor and clarity is not the only attraction artificial intelligence holds for philosophers.”⁴³ What would a “(partial) guarantee” be? Is it respectable? Sound? Are rigor and clarity partially guaranteed or does the guarantee cover partial rigor? Are respectable philosophers “attracted” to fields? How rigorous is it to rely upon attraction? “The discipline of programming also leads to a shift in perspective on traditional issues. It invites – or rather requires – one to adopt what [Daniel] Dennett (1968) calls the design stance toward the mind.”⁴⁴ Dennett’s stance supplants inquiry into the nature of rationality with inquiry into how a rational agent might be designed: “Rather than ask under what conditions someone can be said to know something, we are led to ask how an agent might be designed that acquires information and applies it in the service of some goal, and what such an agent’s environment must be like for the design to work.”⁴⁵ This cognitive cue, tied to teleology, raises questions that, while not addressed in the introductory essay, concern the function of model and prototype, of that which is being tested, designed, and “invented” in view of a particular goal. In terms of its most expansive implications, the theme of information design opens a region wherein the distinction between discovery and the more instrumental epistemology of how something works is suspended. An invention no longer is figurable as a spontaneous eruption of substantial thingness but now gets serialized or parallel processed by various trials and tryouts. Although not foregrounded in terms of computational dependability, this more marginalized aspect of testability supports a structure given over to improvement and improvisation – indeed, an incomplete structure which, if not respectable, is rigorous but open-ended. The more subtle folds of testability, their tendency to collapse or open unexpected areas for thought and experiment, are however left untouched in order, it would seem, to keep intact the phantasm of testing’s groundedness and unquestioned solidity. In bringing forward such objections I am not picking on a minor deflection or bizarre moment in a generally more reliable field:

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these disturbances are characteristic of the self-assured procedures of present-day inquiry and continue to call for further reflection.

b) In a noteworthy, if somewhat typical, discussion that includes theories of algorithms applicable to real-time behavior, a snag emerges under the aegis of the "planning problem." In this instance AI is mustered for the purpose of probing research methods, and it searches out the space of possible actions to compute some sequence of actions and decision theory.⁴⁶ The problem deals with the fact that agents, "whether human or robots, are *resource* bounded: they are unable to form arbitrarily large computations in constant time."⁴⁷ In sum, the dilemma concerns the time zone paradox of freezing the future in order to plan, on another register, the time for working through computations. The more complicated computations become, the more time it takes and the less we are in sync with the possibility of a grounded answer. "This is a problem because the more time spent on deliberations, the more chance there is that the world will change in important ways – ways that will undermine the very assumptions on which the deliberation is proceeding."⁴⁸ If anything, this dilemma indicates an acute time-bound paradox that undermines the conditions for thinking through a problem, or even for questioning its appropriateness for inquiry. The somewhat hidden opposition that begins to come clean in this line of argument entails the speedup of the present that runs up against the more lugubrious pace of "deliberation."

The assumption, pitting the timing of the test *versus* the time of thinking, dominates a number of the problems that are focalized in AI considerations. The thriller dimension of current research, which, setting its timer, gives scientific inquiry the rush it apparently needs to set up for its goal, is very possibly based on the misguided notion that "the world will change in important ways." To offset the competitive quality of the research that is being clocked, more philosophy must be allowed to drift in, if only to demystify those ideologies of acceleration that relentlessly run down the slower-paced thinking and overstabilize an ethics of hesitation.

Whether as origin or effect of temporal hysteria, newer technologies strain to beat the ontic clock. A problem besetting recent AI planning systems is that they have been designed "to construct plans prior to, and distinct from, their execution. It is recognized that the construction of plans takes time. However, these plans have been constructed for a set of

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future conditions that are known in advance and frozen.⁷⁴⁹ The conditions for which a plan has been constructed, the so-called start state, must be known not to change prior to execution. There exists, then, at once a fear that future conditions will overtake the calculations made for them and that they consist of altogether knowable factors to be frozen in advance. A major tensional drama occurs in the noncoincidence of planning and its execution. Planning phases include such exercises as modeling, testing, constructing prototypes, development. Regardless of whether the future is foreseeable or not, something has to be maintained as a stable factor: in these considerations stability is bestowed by the test. If the test cannot originate knowledge, it at least confirms that there is knowledge. However, even if a test, to fulfill its bald constative claims, assumes the function of providing definitive results or minimally of confirming that cognition occurs, testing, for its part and imparting, is always temporally determined. Thus the criterion of testability also inscribes the erasure of what is to be tested. Given the timed stretch between prototype and execution – one of many possible models – testing, in principle, can never catch up with itself in order to locate or stabilize itself in the cognitive domain for which it nonetheless serves as proof: another reason why tests have to be taken over and over again, if only to fill the fictional time of the absolute present, or of the experience of such a present.

In light of what has been said thus far, a related dimension of testing comes into the picture at this point. This development concerns the level of *responsiveness* that the test presupposes and for which it aims. Despite the scope of radical provisionality defining its extended field, in some cases the test itself assumes the function of knowing the answer. While the test is a questioning act, and while it may prompt the necessity of counterexamples, it already contains and urges a sense of the correct way to answer its demand. It does not pose what we might call an innocent question but has arranged things in such a way as to run ahead of itself to catch the answer for which it calls. To be sure, the test itself may be “surprised” by the way in which it is answered. Surprised by its own answer, of which it is henceforth dispossessed, the test attacks epistemological meaning with a kind of ontological fervor. The surprise passes for a shiver in ontology; something trembles in being.

To the extent that the test, according to its more constative pretexts, delivers results, corroborating or disconfirming what is thought to be

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known or even to exist, it can undermine anything that does not respond to its probative structure. The status of the thing tends to topple under the pressure of the test. Somewhat paradoxically, it is not clear even that something is known until there is a test for it. Consider the relevant passages in Douglas Hofstadter's well-known discussion of computer language, automatic chunking, and BlooP tests. BlooP defines predictably terminating calculations: "The standard name for *functions* which are BlooP-computable is *primitive recursive functions*; and the standard name for properties which can be detected by BlooP-tests is *primitive recursive predicates*."⁵⁰ It appears that, according to Hofstadter's view, extreme particularities do not correspond to testing but must be tapped for universal formulae. The test follows upon a sort of screening procedure that detects the universalizable trace: "Now the kinds of properties which can be detected by BlooP tests are widely varied. . . . The fact that, as of the present moment, we have no way of testing whether a number is wondrous or not need not disturb us too much, for it might merely mean that we are ignorant about wondrousness, and that with more digging around, we could discover a universal formula for the upper bound to the loop involved. Then a BlooP test for wondrousness could be written on the spot."⁵¹ In this context, it turns out that that test is not viewed so much as that which can prove more or less established hypotheses or provide new knowledge; it acts as an effect of knowledge that precomprehends itself – a certain type of metaphysically secured knowledge that needs only to *find* itself. In this rendering, the test eludes a broader definition in favor of probing and confirming its own foundation as presence, even if this should be inscribed in the form of latent concealment ("need not disturb us too much, for it might merely mean that we are ignorant"). The BlooP as metonymy of testing does not test anything outside the delimited field about which it already knows. This is not much different from saying that proofs are demonstrations within fixed systems of propositions. The type of logic deployed by Hofstadter appears to call for a test that ensures its own perpetuation without compromise or contamination from a designated outside. But what if the proofs were to explode the propositions? In other words, what if the test were itself to fail and significantly falter?

The normatively secured test does not generate knowledge but confirms what already exists as "knowable." Yet, as it sets its limits strictly, in accordance with specific codes or conventions, testing inevitably checks

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for the unknown loop that takes it beyond mere passing or failing, beyond determinacy or the result. The unpretended aim of a test, one could say here, is to meet its hidden blind spot, to fail. This is when it produces an effect of discovery, which occurs as accident, chance, confusion, or luck – something on the order of broad off-track betting. We are given to understand that true failure is not merely of an instrumental nature, such as technical defect or mechanical failure. Generous failure, productive of disclosure, concerns a type of testing that probes more than the workability or conformity of its object to an already regulated norm – more than, say, a smog test (though, in keeping with essential failure, the politics of the test would no doubt be far more interesting if all cars were to be failed in service of another modeling of exhaust systems).

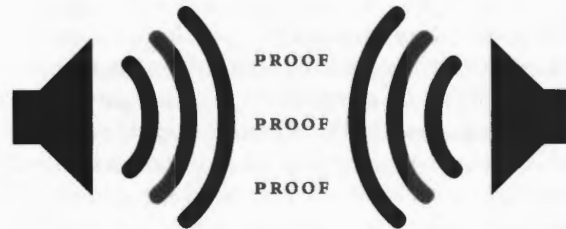
In a limited technological sense, the putative difference between passing or failing may be a trivial issue, as the recursive nature of the test determines its generation regardless of discrete results. It is in the nature of testing to be ongoing indefinitely, even when the simulation may pass into the referential world. As simulated and operational orders collapse into a single zone (where, for instance, an absolute distinction between real war and field test would be difficult to maintain over time), the more interesting questions of cadence, interruption, or reinterpretation emerge. Is it possible, in our era, to stop or even significantly disrupt and reroute the significance of testing? In terms of political-pragmatic programs, we have seen the difficulties involved, for example, in banning nuclear tests. It is as if they have become naturalized, an unstoppable force. The successive attempts at banning tests require the intervention of signed treaties. We know from classical philosophy, which has not been contradicted on this point, from Kant (“A Sketch for Perpetual Peace”) through Walter Benjamin (“Critique of Violence”) and more contemporary analyses, that treaties suspend violence only momentarily, artificially.³² The irony of Kant’s unfinished sketch gratifies the allegory of an impossible peace. Because testing henceforth belongs to the question of violence – involving treaties, conventions, regulations, policing, ethical debate, considerations of eco-ontology, and the like – only with the help of a discussion of rhetorical codes strong enough to scan the paradoxical logic of testing can we begin to figure the problem of its unstopability, if indeed this is to be understood, today, as a problem.

Does the test occupy a juridical and strictly legal space or does it pro-

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duce a space that supplements these determinations – perhaps even supporting and altering them according to another logic? The task of reading the links between violence and testing through the legality and topology of the test site – its possible *anomy*, that is, the extralegal privilege of testing – requires us however to pass the test through the modalities of its undecidable bearings: it is necessary and possible to understand testing through the lens of impossible conjunctions – as good and evil, as situated beyond good and evil, if not as that which decisively directs the very determination of good and evil. A radical formulation of the questions at hand leads us to ask, Can there be any ascertainable good prior to the test? (Short of Platonic shredders, what allows us to know whether something is “good” if it has not been put to the test?) Or worse, still: Can there be a human being without a test? (For an analogy in fiction, one thinks of the endless battery of tests devised for determining the replicant/human difference in the prototype sequencing of *Blade Runner*.) If we were able to get through to the other side of these questions, beyond the ambivalence that the test appears at every juncture to restore, and supposing we decided that it would be best to end with the secret syndications of testing: Under what conditions would banning or disruption be at all possible?

We have noted how AI posits testability as ground. In addition, it appears to share with Kurt Gödel the optimism that testing will catch up with truth. In other words, AI does not reflect upon the value of the truth it posits or upon the largely performative forces that fuel its assumption of truth. Gödel has argued that there are true statements of number theory that its methods of proof are too weak to demonstrate. His proof pertained to *any* axiomatic system purporting to achieve the aims that Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, in their *Principia Mathematica*, had set for themselves. Gödel shows how statements of number theory, being also statements about statements of number theory, could each misdirect a proof. In sum, Gödel demonstrates that provability “is a weaker notion than truth.”⁵³ This is not the place to interrogate precisely how truth works in the coding scheme; nonetheless, it seems safe to say that Gödel rescues truth from limitative results of provability, keeping it intact and pinned to an idealized horizon of expectation.



PROTOTYPE AMERICA To the extent that the experimental disposition emerges from constant self-differentiation, can simulate itself, and wears, as Nietzsche suggests, many masks, it unquestionably belongs to an experimental site that Nietzsche called in a crucial moment of development “America.” If I say “development,” it is because Nietzsche for once offers thanks to Hegel for having introduced into science the decisive concept of development. The gratitude is short-lived: we learn quickly that Hegel *delayed* “atheism most dangerously for the longest time” by persuading us of the divinity of existence where Schopenhauer’s unconditional and honest atheism at least made the ungodliness of existence “palpable” and “indisputable.”⁵⁴ America becomes an experimental site because it is the place of acting and *role playing* – a concept developed by Nietzsche for America or by America for Nietzsche. At this point or place, Nietzsche links experimentation with the development of improv techniques. The principal axioms of the gay science are related to dimensions of exploration and discovery; discovery is not seen simply in terms of “invention” but, under certain conditions, as a way of discovering what was already there, inhabited, which is why Nietzsche sometimes takes recourse to the discovery of America – an event, an experiment, a unique stage for representing discovery without invention in conjunction with serious historical risk. If Mary Shelley had seen the discovery of America as an event that occurred too suddenly, without the stops and protections of gradual inquiry – in sum, as a world-historical shock of intrusive violence that disrupted all sorts of ecologies, material and immaterial, conscious and unconscious – Nietzsche studies the profound disruption to thought that the experimental theater of America directed.⁵⁵ Taking off for America, he redefines the place of the experimenter, letting go of familiar mappings and manageable idioms. The experimenter must give up any secure anchoring in a homeland, allow herself to be directed by an

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accidental current rather than aiming for a preestablished goal. The accidental current becomes the groove for a voyage taken without helmsman, without any commanding officer or function, Nietzsche insists. As exemplary contingency plan, America allows for outstanding reinscriptions of fortuity. Its alliance with unprecedented applications of the inessential – a history dominated by risk – gives everyone the hope at least of having an even chance. The fate of America, or this aspect of it, was written into its constitution as a land of discovery. And now, to the accidental discovery of America, where Nietzsche goes on a job hunt.

There have been ages when men believed with rigid confidence, even with piety, in their predestination for precisely one particular occupation, “precisely this way of earning a living, and simply refused to acknowledge the element of accident, role, and caprice. With the help of this faith, classes, guilds and hereditary trade privileges managed to erect those monsters of social pyramids that distinguish the Middle Ages and to whose credit one can adduce at least one thing: durability (and duration is a first-rate value on earth).” Uninterrogated durability and rigid social hierarchy will be thrown over by what Nietzsche calls “America”:

But there are opposite ages, really democratic, where people give up this faith, and a certain cocky faith and opposite point of view advance more and more into the foreground – the Athenian faith that first becomes noticeable in the Periclean age, the faith of the Americans today that is more and more becoming the European faith as well: The individual becomes convinced that he can do just about everything and can manage almost any role, and everybody experiments with himself, improvises, makes new experiments, enjoys his experiments; and all nature ceases and becomes art.⁵⁶

A disfiguring translation of the Renaissance man, the jack-of-all-trades is an American symptom rebounding to Europe, changing the configuration of the want ads that erase natural constraints. One is up for anything, open to the identity *du jour*, capable of ceaseless remakes and integral adjustment. The American athleticism of identity switching has marked politics everywhere, brushing against ideologies of authentic rootedness or natural entitlement. It also means that anyone can in principle try anything out, the bright flipside of which we count the art of improv and experimentation, including performance art and jazz



Cosmopolitan
America?

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(music was always with science on this point, from at least Bach's *Inventions* to synthesizers and the communities of their computerized beyond).⁵⁷ Nietzsche's focus rests on the individual's incredible conviction that he can manage any role. The refined profile for role management, by the way, Nietzsche locates in the Jewish people, who have had to rigorously play it as it comes, go with the flow, adjust and associate. The experimenter is at once the experimentee: there is little room here for securing the range of scientific or artistic distance, or, more precisely, he supplies just enough slack to let one try oneself out. Everyone turns himself into a test site, produces ever new experiments, and, significantly, *enjoys* these experiments. This plasticity does not match the solemn lab for which Dr. Frankenstein becomes the paradigmatic director, weighted as he is with Germanic gravity and remorse over the meaning of his relentless experiments. Nonetheless, oppositions should not be held too rigidly, for Europe and America are sharing needles on this one, contaminating one another according to the possibilities of new experimental *jouissance*. In the end Victor Frankenstein, too, was carried over the top by his brand of *jouissance*, by a level of desire punctuated by grim determination.

Threat
of
AIDS,
again

Clearly, there is a price to be paid by the experimental player. One cannot remain detached from the activity of intense experimentation but finds oneself subject to morphing: One grows into one's experimental role and becomes one's mask. America's increasing obsession with actors – now actors have political views – has roots in Greece and can be connected in Nietzsche to his observations on nonsubstantial role playing:

After accepting this role faith – an artist's faith, if you will – the Greeks, as is well known, went step for step through a rather odd metamorphosis that does not merit imitation in all respects: They really became actors. . . . and whenever a human being begins to discover how he is playing a role and how he can be an actor, he becomes an actor. . . . It is thus that the maddest and most interesting ages of history always emerge, when the "actors," all kinds of actors, become the real masters. As this happens, another human type is disadvantaged more and more and finally made impossible; above all, the great "architects": The strength to build becomes paralyzed; the courage to make plans that encompass the distant future is discouraged; those with a genius for organization become scarce: who would still dare to undertake projects that would require thousands of years for their completion? For what is dying out is the

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fundamental faith that would enable us to calculate, to promise, to anticipate the future in plans of such scope, and to sacrifice the future to them – namely, the faith that man has value and meaning only insofar as he is a stone in a great edifice; and to that end he must be solid first of all, a “stone” – and above all not an actor!⁵⁸

Nietzsche enters the zone where actors become the ruling part – “the real masters” – but he is careful to unleash the irony of mimetic dissuasion. This theater of politics and value-positing stunts should not necessarily be imitated, he warns. In this passage of paradoxical reversal, experimenting gradually becomes associated with America and the impending rule of actors. Philosophy comes to see experimenting in the negative light of project paralysis, inhibiting acts of promising, calculating, or anticipation – acts by which the future can be nailed down, as it were, and “sacrificed” to the performatives that bind it. The futural stone age has been compromised, however, by new human flora and fauna, which, Nietzsche asserts, could never have grown in more solid and limited ages. So the experimental disposition, cast in soft metaphors, waters down the solid reputation of the ages, showing the experimenter to be not quite solid as a rock but rather absorbed into a soft present that recedes into itself from distance or future. Nonetheless, Nietzsche considers this age as one without limit – of unlimited finity; the age of “actors” encompasses the maddest and most interesting of possible ages. It is not clear how the loss of this hard rock faith ought to be evaluated in the end, because Nietzsche elsewhere tends to emphasize the need for shedding such faith and, when taking on new forms spontaneously, he gets the green card and becomes somewhat of an American himself.

Citizen-
Temporary

Nietzsche is well within his comfort zone when the personal technologies of shedding and softening take hold of existence, when brevity becomes the correct tact to measure out a given stage of life. He is attached only to brief habits, he writes, describing a fluidity that allows him to get to know many things and states:

I love brief habits and consider them an inestimable means for getting to know many things and states, down to the bottom of their sweetness and bitternesses. My nature is designed entirely for brief habits, even in the needs of my physical health and altogether as far as I can see at all – from the lowest to the highest. I always believe that here is something that will

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give me lasting satisfaction – brief habits, too, have this faith of passion, this faith in eternity – and that I am to be envied for having found and recognized it; and now it nourishes me at noon and in the evening and spreads a deep contentment all around itself and deep into me so that I desire nothing else, without having any need for comparisons, contempt, or hatred. But one day its time is up; the good thing parts from me, not as something that has come to nauseate me but peacefully and sated with me as I am with it – as if we had reason to be grateful to each other as we shook hands to say farewell. Even then something new is waiting at the door, along with my faith – this indestructible fool and sage! – that this new discovery will be just right, and that this will be the last time. That is what happens to me with dishes, ideas, human beings, cities, poems, music, doctrines, ways of arranging the day, and life styles.⁵⁹

Beyond stating the motif of farewell and Nietzschean gratitude, the passage inventories the things that offer themselves to experimentation, testing, and structural rearrangement, covering the span from dishes, cities, schedule, and music to Nietzsche's unquestionably Californian invention of life-style. The existential range of motion allows for time to press upon pleasure, to mark the end with a mastered violence. Nietzsche says and sees the day when, with a feeling of satiety and peacefulness, the time comes for all good things to bid him farewell. This reciprocal scene of departure invites the relation with things to evade the punishing rhythm of violent and constant improvisation. Something stays with him – the brief habit does not overthrow a certain habitual groundedness that supports brevity and experimental essays. In fact, an excess of habitlessness would destroy the thinker and send him out of America into Siberia. He admits, "[m]ost intolerable, to be sure, and the terrible par excellence would be for me a life entirely devoid of habits, a life that would demand perpetual improvisation. That would be my exile and my Siberia." Carried to extremes, the homelessness of experimentation turns into unsettling exile – into the horror of being – when it demands nonstop improv. Still, the opposite of horror is odious to Nietzsche, a kind of political noose around his delicate neck:

Enduring habits I hate. I feel as if a tyrant had come near me and as if the air I breathe had thickened when events take such a turn that it appears that they will inevitably give rise to enduring habits; for example, owing

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to an official position, constant association with the same people, a permanent domicile, or unique good health. Yes, at the very bottom of my soul I feel grateful to all my misery and bouts of sickness and everything about me that is imperfect, because this sort of thing leaves me with a hundred backdoors through which I can escape from enduring habits.⁶⁰

The experimental disposition, then, has to dismantle its internal and material lab frequently to keep the punctual rhythm of the brief habit going – a philosophical policy susceptible of significant consequences. Nietzsche never places the experiment on the side of monumentality or reliable duration; it cannot be viewed as a project. Nor is he attached to a particular form of experiment – this is not the scientist obsessed with an *idée fixe* – but one capable of uprooting and going, for better or worse, with the diversifying flow of ever new flora and fauna. This degree of openness, though it does have its limits and points of closure, necessarily invites ambivalence – those moments, for instance, when Nietzsche stalls, dreaming of immense edifices and the permanence promised by contracts written in stone.

Although he at every point invites precisely such a register of understanding, the Nietzschean ambivalence toward experimentation cannot be reduced to the personal whim or contingent caprice of Fred Nietzsche, even when he experiments on himself or writes in a letter to Peter Gast that the *Gay Sci* was the most *personal* among his books. What he means by “personal” has everything to do with the nature of scientificity that he expounds. In Nietzsche as in Goethe, scientists are at no point placed strictly or simply outside the field of experimentation; part of the thinking of personality, they cannot extricate themselves from the space of inquiry in the name of some mystified or transcendental project from which the personhood of the scientist can be dropped out or beamed up at will. The test site can always blow up in their faces or make ethical demands on them – for Nietzsche, this would remain a personal dilemma.⁶¹ But let us see where it takes us in terms of the personalized cartography of the *Gay Sci*.

Since we have established temporary residency in the philosopheme, America (or, at this point, one might almost say in the *hypothesis* of America), I would like to migrate first to another text, before returning to Nietzsche – if only to satisfy his desire for the punctuality of the brief habit and to follow out the multiple departures that his text prescribes.

THE TEST DRIVE

the
university
tests.

Once again, the line of flight takes us to one of the futures of Nietzsche's Gay Sci. In sync with the Nietzschean effort to think science according to the complexities of the experimental disposition, Max Weber sets up the stakes of the test drive, which he traces from its Hellenic origins to Nietzsche and the American compulsion to test everything: his argument refers us to material instances of testing such as the Ph.D. written, oral, comprehensive, general, and qualifying examinations, to teaching evaluations and the corresponding physical and mental stress tests. An incentive for citing Weber in this context is prompted by his understanding of the history of scientific work, which links experiment in art and science to academic testing and the question of research in the modern sense. "Let me take you once more to America," Weber writes in his famous essay "Science as a Vocation." He has just finished demonstrating the differences between a Privatdozent, who earns nothing but is somewhat exalted and the tremendously exploited Assistant Professor, who earns some wages (barely enough to subsist on) but is not exalted. Assistant Professors find themselves subjected instead to the trials of the quasi-proletariat – with chairman, institution, and colleagues all poised against them. In fact, Assistant Professors, unlike their German counterparts, relate to the university and their departmental chair with the same terror and forced deference as do the proletariat toward factory and boss. Weber will take us from American testing to the question of research in the Nietzschean sense. "The American boy," he observes, "learns unspeakably less than the German boy. In spite of an incredible number of examinations, his school life has not had the significance of turning him into an absolute creature of examinations, such as the German. For in America, bureaucracy, which presupposes the exam diploma as a ticket of admission to the realm of office prebends, is only in its beginnings."⁶² Weber links exam hypertrophy to a cultural epidemic of disrespect – the basis of democracy:

The young American has no respect for anything or anybody, for tradition or for public office – unless it is for the personal achievement of individual men. This is what America calls "democracy." . . . The American's conception of the teacher who faces him is: he sells me his knowledge and his methods for my father's money, just as the green-grocer sells my mother cabbage. And that is all. To be sure, if the teacher

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happens to be a football coach, then, in this field, he is a leader. But if he is not this (or something similar in a different field of sports), he is simply a teacher and nothing more. And no young American would think of having the teacher sell him a *Weltanschauung* or a code of conduct. Now, when formulated in this manner, we should reject this. But the question is whether there is not a grain of salt contained in this feeling, which I have deliberately stated in extreme with some exaggeration.⁶³

The teacher, bankrolled by the father, is linked in terms of headspace to the cabbage purchased at the grocer's by the mother. The debasement of teacher to an implicit word salad without ideological or world-historical gravity may seem grotesque, but Weber is not so sure that it should be viewed as such. It puts a restraining order on the possibly devastating politics of transference that teacher's function could otherwise prime. No one is going to follow this teacher to the hell of war under the flag of totalitarian conviction. No one is going to salute the rectoral speech of a cabbage-head teacher. (However, in America the rage in the 1980s and 1990s for cabbage-patch dolls did once provoke a major transference crisis, so one cannot simply predict where or when transference will take root.) Due to the teacher's position in the capital theater of parental auction, there will be very few transfer students in the class of democratic school systems. The teacher is reduced to a bare minimum of functions, with only the supplementary space of school team sports conferring qualities of leadership on the teaching subject. Whether doubling as a football coach or not, the downgraded teacher mainly prepares students for a battery of "no pain no gain" examinations.

The figure of the teacher, the problem of proper places and problematic displacements, turn in Weber's unfolding observations on the status of science. In fact, the teacher never entirely leaves the scene and functions like a ticker, a continuously looping crawl on the bottom of news broadcasts such as those of CNN. The teacher is not locked out of the discursive classroom that Weber installs, though the pedagogical function momentarily takes a backseat during the historical-philosophical elaboration. Weber ticks off the stages of scientific work before returning to the teaching crisis. He proceeds by seizing the experiment as a way of controlling experience: "The second great tool of scientific work [the first was Plato's discovery of the concept], the rational experiment, made its

Role of
the
Teacher
in the
American
System

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appearance at the side of this discovery of the Hellenic spirit during the Renaissance period. The experiment is a means of reliably controlling experience."⁶⁴ The emergence of the experimental *Weltanschauung* is wide-ranging. Earlier experiments include physiological experiments made in India in the service of ascetic yoga technique; in Hellenic antiquity, mathematical experiments were made for purposes of war technology. "But to raise the experiment to a principle of research was the achievement of the Renaissance. They were the great innovators in art, who were the pioneers of experiment. Leonardo and his like and, above all, the sixteenth-century experimenters in music with their experimental pianos were characteristic. From these circles the experiment entered science, especially through Galileo, and it entered theory through Bacon; and then it was taken over by the various exact disciplines of the continental universities, first of all those of Italy and then those of the Netherlands."⁶⁵

Framing the significance of the scientific impulse for later centuries, Weber asks what science meant to those who stood at the threshold of modern times: "To artistic experimenters of the type of Leonardo and the musical innovators, science meant the path to true *art*, and that meant for them the path to true *nature*. Art was to be raised to the rank of a science, and this meant at the same time and above all to raise the artist to the rank of a doctor, socially and with reference to the meaning of his life. This is the ambition on which, for instance, Leonardo's sketchbook was based. And today? 'Science as a way to nature' would sound like blasphemy to youth."⁶⁶ Weber travels an unmarked path as he reads off the ratings of science in relation to art; he suspends the genealogist's commentary when tracing the values associated with art and science. In the earlier phases, science provides a conduit to art; later, it appears, the artist strives for the scientific upgrade, seeking the position of doctor. Now art wants to "be raised" to the rank of science; a turnaround in the scoring system of values has taken root somewhere in Leonardo's sketchbook. The task of science was, moreover, conceived as illuminating the path of God (Weber recalls Swammerdam's statement, "Here I bring you the proof of God's providence in the anatomy of a louse") when "people no longer found this path among the philosophers, with their concepts and deductions." When philosophy became dry and nearly mathematical in its procedures and aims, science became the hope and desire for a more bouncy tran-

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scendence, offering a clearer embrace of immanence as well. And today? "Who – aside from certain big children who are indeed found in the natural sciences – still believes that the findings of astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry could teach us anything about the *meaning* of the world? If there is any such 'meaning,' along what road could one come upon its tracks?"⁶⁷

In the quake and wake of meaning, Nietzsche begins, almost predictably, to show his face. He arrives in the text as the one to have undone the promises of Plato and Aristotle, uprooting childish notions of happiness: "After Nietzsche's devastating criticism of those 'last men' who 'invented happiness,' I may leave aside altogether the naive optimism in which science – that is, the technique of mastering life which rests upon science – has been celebrated as the way to happiness. Who believes in this? – aside from a few big children in university chairs or editorial offices."⁶⁸ The university, along with some editorial hubs, has become a playpen for outstripped fantasies concerning the pursuit of happiness. The implications of the conceptual quarantine are considerable for science, because it now has to regroup in terms of establishing its self-understanding in a convincing and worldly way. Interestingly, literature was already there to give expression to the scientific predicament.

The meaning of science as a vocation after the collapse of these illusions (as the way to true being, the way to true art, the way to true nature, the way to true God, the way to true happiness) was supplied by Tolstoy, who asserted that science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important for us: "What shall we do and how shall we live?" That science does not give an answer to this, remarks Weber, "is indisputable. The only question that remains is the sense in which science gives 'no' answer." Science cannot tell whether something is worth being known just as medicine does not presume to ask whether life – the life that it finds itself obligated by contract to save – is worth living. Nor, for that matter, do we find aesthetics, which takes as a given the fact that there are works of art, asking whether there *should* be works of art. Jurisprudence does not wonder whether there should be laws. Science, hardly free from presupposition, presupposes "that what is yielded by scientific work is 'worth being known.' In this, obviously, are contained all our problems. For this presupposition cannot be proved by scientific means. It can only be interpreted with reference to its ultimate meaning,

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which we must reject or accept according to our ultimate position towards life.”⁶⁹ The presupposition of value – is it worth being known, living, existing? – cannot be supported, much less proven by scientific means. Such untouchable premises belong to the family of logic that induced Heidegger to state, rather categorically, that science does not think. Weber is more tentative in his evaluation of value-positing science. Can any entity assert with uncompromised lucidity the worthiness of its existence? Such abyss openers are usually avoided by the very discursive formations that depend upon them for their existence. Weber sheds light on the way in which withholding or withdrawal marks an opening and asks that we contemplate the way that science gives no answer. Judging by the quotation marks placed on “no,” it is likely that “‘no’ answer” is, for Weber, also an answer or rather that, on some vital level, there is no such thing as no answer. Another possibility, for which Weber allows with equal vigor, indicates that the question is in the first place misplaced. Should we go so far as to ask science to comment on what we should do or how we should live or how to think and cherish life? Have we lost our senses?

And yet Nietzsche does call upon science – in its second stage as experiment – to affirm life. The affirmation by no means arrives from an imagined outside of life, but from life as scientific, joyous science – a scientificity that nonetheless crashes against the implacable harshness of experience and is called upon endlessly to clear abysses without disavowing their dangers. Indeed, the experimental turn not only responds to the question that science, in the run from Tolstoy to Heidegger, is said necessarily to have evaded: “is it worth it?” – but it posits value and produces a site from which to evaluate value, the very worthiness of worth. For different reasons, the worthiness of worth has been sidelined by science.

An imposing test site according to Weber’s logic still pulses from the institution of higher learning. Its crucial manifestation occurs in the university classroom. At some level everything in our academic spaces is meant for trial. A breeding ground for test exercises, the university makes itself susceptible to the delegitimizing drills of its own premises. The professor comes in handy as figuring the university’s tendency to undermine its cause. Academic speech consistently fails the test of scientific integrity by lapsing into prophecy and other ideological excesses whenever professors take a stand. The university, comprised as it is by all sorts of research facilities – endless labs, including those made for body-experi-

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mentations, the incorporated gymnasiums, examination procedures (and, in some instances, military and police exercises) – always risks crossing over into nonscientific conviction when the big kids start announcing their beliefs. The professor helps focalize the difficulty of stabilizing assigned places within the university: What is on trial, constantly put to the test, in Weber's essay is the professor's ability to occupy the appropriate space. It is as if the common surprise quizzes, tests, examination procedures, and so forth were meant to mirror the professor's dilemma, inverting the processes of judgment and evaluation. *

Even while administering tests, the professor in actuality is really being tested and retested for levels and dynamics of probity which, in the case Weber examines, amounts to maintaining distinctions between what legitimately can occur inside and outside the circumscribed academic space. The professor holds the boundary line between the proper and improper, which is why she (in Weber's case, "he") is bound to fail the university, which requires for its continued legitimacy the illusion of an absolute boundary: "The prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform. To the prophet and the demagogue, it is said: 'Go your ways out into the streets and speak openly to the world.' . . . The professor who feels called upon to act as a counselor of youth and enjoys their trust may prove himself a man in his personal relations with them. And if he feels called upon to intervene in the struggles of world views and party opinions, he may do so outside, in the market place, in the press, in meetings, in associations, wherever he wishes. But after all, it is somewhat too convenient to demonstrate one's courage in taking a stand where the audience and possible opponents are condemned to silence."⁷⁰ In the classroom the teacher must clean up his act, tone down the prophetic pathos, and follow a nonideological teaching plan. It is interesting to note that Weber sends the teacher back to the marketplace to express worldviews.

In the end, the premises upon which scientifically rigorous teaching might be based cannot be proven scientifically. There is, strictly speaking, despite Pestalozzi and other trailblazers in the field, no reliable "pedagogy." Thus the duty of the teacher remains extraneous to the teaching scene or any learning curve – this tour of duty cannot be taught, demonstrated, or proven. *

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Now one cannot demonstrate scientifically what the duty of an academic teacher is. One can only demand of the teacher that he have the intellectual integrity to see that it is one thing to state facts, to determine mathematical or logical relations or the internal structure of cultural values, while it is another thing to answer questions of the value of culture and its individual contents and the question of how one should act in the cultural community and in political associations. These are quite heterogeneous problems. If he asks further why he should not deal with both types of problems in the lecture-room, the answer is: because the prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform.

The prophet and demagogue must go out into the streets – the place, according to Weber, where criticism meets its match and becomes possible. This is a key point, locking up the proper teacher inside the classroom; however, it gets twisted by Weber's recognition later in the essay that the streets, as topos for discussion and open to criticism, are disappearing. He does not quite declare the vanishing of the public sphere and the multiplication of new and virtual beats but addresses instead the movement of retreat of critical ideological commentary, in our times, to spaces of intimacy and mystical abandon. By this time, school is out:

The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world." Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. It is not accidental that our greatest art is intimate and not monumental, nor is it accidental that today only within the smallest and intimate circles, in personal human situations, in pianissimo, that something is pulsating that corresponds to the prophetic pneuma, which in former times swept through the great communities like a firebrand, welding them together. If we attempt to force and to "invent" a monumental style in art, such miserable monstrosities are produced as the many monuments of the last twenty years. If one tries intellectually to construe new religions without a new and genuine prophecy, then, in an inner sense, something similar will result, but with still worse effects. And academic prophecy, finally, will create only fanatical sects but never a genuine community.

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It can be observed that, in order to make this statement, Weber himself delivers something of an academic prophecy. The question remains of how to locate the space of Weber's elaboration, or where to designate a place for thought that can legitimately produce something like a worldview. The problem is that the world, together with the implied spaces on which Weber relies, has been shattered – in part, by the very experimental exercises that he studies. The world scanned by Weber no longer conforms to a transcendental coherency that would permit the imperiturbability of the *Weltanschauung*. Another problem – Weber's world disenchantment points to this area of conceptual turbulence – is that **democracy** implicitly depends on a notion of polis, which no doubt accounts for Weber's circumscription of a marketplace even as he measures the disappearance of political spaces. There is no place to channel the prophetic *pneuma*, which is perhaps why its course has been relocated to the university, a kind of model polis internally governed by remnants of an ancient regime.

Still, academic prophecy, Weber predicts, will result only in the creation of fanatical sects and no genuine community. At this point one needs to wonder if a "genuine community" has passed the test of fanaticism and why Weber has chosen this expression rather than a more democratic, less Christian, one. The university offers the limit-space where some of these notions can be tried out. Yet, like Nietzsche whom he cites abundantly, Weber must drop out in order to get his ideas across. Although clocked in a bit later than Nietzsche, Weber still has access to the somewhat more stable spaces of yesteryear. Nietzsche is more strained by the reactive forces of democracy (following his own rules and regs, he evaluates democracy from the perspectives of active and reactive forces) and has lost by now more ground than Weber in terms of putting a world together or projecting a community to come. Both thinkers are futural sprinters, no doubt, but Nietzsche is shooting ahead or at least shooting for what Derrida calls a "democracy-to-come."⁷¹ Most consequential for us, given the duties at hand, Weber can be said to contain and neutralize the emergence of *experimentum* and related testing systems – they still have a locality – while for Nietzsche, one is tempted to say, the test site has irrevocably corrupted the world and exploded the illusion of any such balsamic borders or bindings. But since we are in Nietzsche territory, this shattering also illuminates the outlines of a promise.

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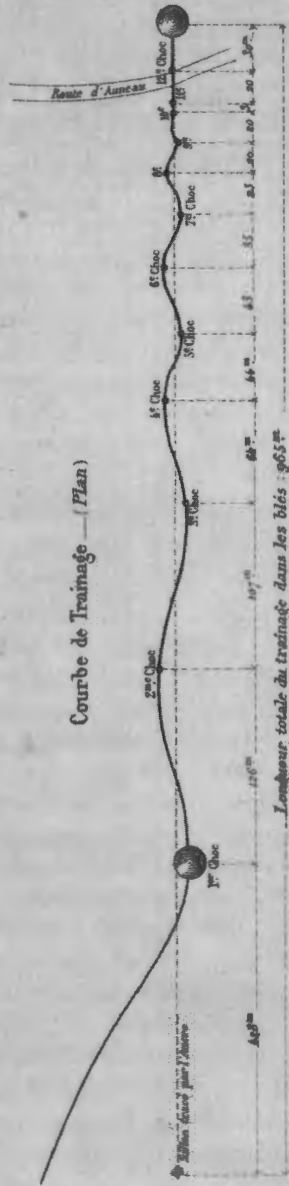
Descente du Ballon le Pôle Nord à Auneau (Eure et Loir) le 27 Juin 1869.

par C. Tissandier

Trajectoire de l'Aérostat. (Elevation)



Courbe de Trainage — (Plan)



Nota. — En Elevation les hauteurs sont à une échelle double de celle du plan.

Gravé par Ehat & Co.

Paris — Imp. Trouilly

The Test Drive

THE EXPERIMENTAL DISPOSITION Nietzsche is in a fix. Two essential desires motivate his text and pull it in different directions. Like the two sets of democratic values that he scores, the agony of double occupancy besets the writing that engages him. The experimental disposition offers him a way of articulating the doubling and division by which he proceeds. Interestingly, the definition of experiment already places it in the twilight zone between what is already there and discovery, between description and invention, splitting reactive and active interpretive possibilities. *Experimentum* means a test or trial of something; specifically of any action or process undertaken to discover something not yet known or to demonstrate something known. Without getting into deconstructive disputes with these terms, let us give free rein to the normative view that tends to pull *experimentum* in favor of experience – being experimental of or based on experience – rather than toward übertheory or authority. Nietzsche especially likes the shriveling of authority that *experimentum* implies. No one gets to say from a hidden, mystified place what the truth is because henceforth every step of the way has to be demonstrated and assured for all to see as well as repeat. This no doubt explains Nietzsche's insistence, en route to America, on the figure of a ship without a helmsman. Within the precincts of experimental effort there is no theory or authority that could control, predict, or steer the experiment on a foreseeable course. In part because experimentality struggles between the domains of two desires schematized in the Gay Sci, Nietzsche's text exhibits cautious ambivalence toward the very structures he discovers: it is bound on the one hand by the desire to fix, to immortalize, "the desire for being" and, on the other hand, by "the desire for destruction, change and becoming." The latter is "an expression of an overflowing energy that is pregnant with future," which Nietzsche terms "Dionysian." These double desires in turn require a dual genealogical interpretation.

Splitting heirs, Nietzsche lets us know that desire affiliated with destruction does not always originate in the overfullness of life. Destruction, change, and becoming can also indicate a pernicious genesis that finds its source in "the hatred of the ill-constituted, disinherited, and underprivileged, who destroy, *must* destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them." The test question for Nietzsche's genealogical evaluation is this: "I ask in every instance 'is it hunger or superabundance that has here become creative?'"⁷² On the side



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of the overfullness of life yet equally on a destructive bent, the Dionysian – a warrior of change and becoming – can absorb tremendous losses and traumas; the Dionysian allows one to deflect the temptation to reproduce the wounding of trauma out of a stance of depletion and anger toward life:

He that is richest in the fullness of life, the Dionysian God and man, cannot only afford the sight of the terrible and questionable but even the terrible deed and any luxury of destruction, decomposition, and negation. In his case, what is evil, absurd, and ugly seems, as it were, permissible, owing to an excess of procreating, fertilizing energies that can still turn any desert into lush farmland. Conversely, those who suffer most and are poorest in life would need above all mildness, peacefulness, and goodness in thought as well as deed – if possible, also a god who would be truly a god for the sick, a healer and savior; also logic, the conceptual understandability of existence – for logic calms and gives confidence – in short, a certain warm narrowness that keeps away fear and encloses one in optimistic horizons.⁷³

2
Tendencies
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Personalities

Christianity and its Dionysian other respond to different types of needs. Logic, intelligibility, as well as the safety zones of hermeneutic horizons and habitual sunsets belong to the Christian solvents. Absurd, ugly, incomprehensible dissociations from meaning-bound or soothing existence belong to the Dionysians. These teams indicate the struggle of forces and hegemonies powerful tendencies on this or the other side of metaphysical comforts. They put their marks on the experimental run, tagging the will to fix or the will to deracinate. But even these moments of heightened willing fissure internally. Thus the will to immortalize also requires a dual interpretation from which its ambiguity stems. It can be prompted, first, by gratitude and love – “bright and gracious like Goethe, spreading a Homeric light and glory over all things.” However “it can also be the tyrannic will of one who suffers deeply, who struggles, is tormented, and would like to turn what is most personal, singular, and narrow, the real idiosyncrasy of his suffering, into a binding law and compulsion – one who, as it were, revenges himself on all things by forcing his own image, the image of his torture, on them, branding them with it.”⁷⁴ For Nietzsche everything is staked on the difference between these two “personalities” of the *experimentum*. Flagger a ship without a helmsman, he nonetheless administers a psychological test in order to evaluate what in effect

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constitutes the function of helmsman. What is steering the odyssey of the *experimentum*? Is it conducted with the bright, confident expansiveness of the cheerfully Homeric Goethe or by a self-tormenting life avenger who wants to construct a monument to a withering history of private suffering? (Both these possibilities exist in Goethe, for there was also the old reactionary policing Goethe who beat up on Hölderlin and Kleist, but that's another story.) When Nietzsche thinks the experimental disposition, all these considerations, moods, and measures must fall into place or at least be taken into account. He doesn't make it easy on us.

The ambiguity discovered by the Gay Sci to inhabit the grid of experimenting, testing, and improvisation prevents Nietzsche from simply affirming them. Whether originating in the fullness or slander of life, they answer to conditions of accelerated deregulation. The experimental disposition must be allowed to run free, even if there exists the risk of its breaking away from any controlled sense of purpose. Still, experimentation never reverts to the mere anarchy of tryouts either, or to the practice of a little boy jumping off the roof in an attempt to fly. There are rules, conventions, regulations, and treaties governing the field of testing, which are repeatedly given over to review. As we have seen, part of Nietzsche wants to tie the test drive, the way it is conducted, to something like the personal taste and experience of the experimenter. However gauged, narrativized, and internally split, the work of the gay scientist draws upon a history of suffering, exile, and pain, which necessarily becomes a measure of the field of discovery without erasing its more discursive requirements. The abundant personality inhabits suffering in a manner that proves difficult to share. This unshareability of the greatest distress no doubt pushes off from Christian and Kantian shorelines. One is, still and ever, on one's own, without God or authority at the helm, without mimetic moorings or citational lifeboats. Prompted by the whole economy of the soul and "our personal and profoundest suffering [which] is incomprehensible and inaccessible to almost everyone," "one simply knows nothing of the whole inner sequence and intricacies that are distress for me or for you. The whole economy of my soul and the balance effected by distress, the way new springs and needs break open, the way in which old wounds are healing, the way whole periods of the past are shed – all such things that may be involved in distress are of no concern to our dear pitying friends; they wish to help and have no thought of the personal neces-

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sity of distress, although terrors, deprivations, impoverishments, midnights, adventures, risks, and blunders are necessary for me and for you as are their opposites.⁷⁵

A community of two, me and you, has a history hidden from almost everyone; it is bound by the incalculable risks and terrors, adventures and blunders (and so forth) constituting our scientific contract. We, me and you, put our experience on the line as a matter of taste and rigor. Complicit in the launching of an unnarratable story of distress, we scrutinize our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment. The crucial moment in which Nietzsche explicates the value of experience in a gay science occurs when he establishes a scientific schedule, writing and signing as a guinea pig in "As interpreters of our experiences":

One sort of honesty has been alien to all founders of religions and their kind: They have never made their experiences a matter of conscience for knowledge. "What did I really experience? What happened in me and around me at that time? Was my reason bright enough? Was my will opposed to all deceptions of the senses and bold in resisting the fantastic?" ... So [our dear religious people] experience "miracles" and "rebirths" and hear the voices of little angels! But we, we others who thirst after reason, are determined to scrutinize our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment – hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our experiments and guinea pigs.⁷⁶

Subjected to the ruthless honesty of self-monitoring, we others turn ourselves into experimenting experiments. In order to sustain this level of honesty in the experimental space, one needs to power up the personality and loosen one's convictions. Let us return to the trope of personality as Nietzsche often does. What precisely does he mean by this, or what does personality guarantee in the thought that Nietzsche is trying to advance here?

To have a strong personality involves the capacity to divest oneself constantly; this has nothing to do with the bloating of selfhood inherited from the Romantics nor, at this point, with the ability to impose one's perspective or will on world. The strong personality allows for and supports self-submission to the radical deprogramming that science implies. As difficult as Nietzsche knows this is to implement, he pleads for a stance consisting of no convictions (in Nietzsche's notes: "A very popular error: having the courage of one's convictions; rather, it is a matter of having the

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courage for an attack of one's convictions!!!").⁷⁷ When convictions infiltrate the space of the scientific experiment they are to be placed under strict police supervision. Convictions, if they are at all allowed to appear, can move about only when handcuffed to the police of mistrust. Yet Nietzsche understands that we mortals like to have our convictions. To the extent that they are still admitted, they serve to remind us that there always was a prior conviction, a slip of metaphysical faith that still has its hold on scientific procedure. The conviction is an illegal alien in the bad sense of that concept, perhaps the only bad sense that we have of the concept:

In science convictions have no rights of citizenship, as one says with good reason. Only when they decide to descend to the modesty of hypotheses, of a provisional experimental point of view, of a regulative fiction, they may be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge – though always under the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust. – But does this not mean, if you consider it more precisely, that a conviction may obtain admission to science only when it ceases to be a conviction? Would it not be the first step in the discipline of the scientific spirit that one would not permit oneself any more convictions?⁷⁸

Once a conviction is let out onto the scientific field of inquiry, it passes beyond its character as conviction. The conviction ought to pass beneath the level of its formerly inflated stature. When humbled to the level of hypothesis, it is on parole and must answer to the officers of science who are watching it. Still, to the extent that we are policing our convictions, no matter how much furlough we grant them, we still have to deal with the fact of ex-convictions, namely, the ex-cons that hold up our scientific impulse to this day:

– 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 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 was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine. – But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie – if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie?⁷⁹

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Still taking his fire from the Platonic-Christian regions of faith, the Nietzschean seeker starts up the process of disabling the metaphysical machine to which he remains attached. Absolute detachment is out of the question. The gay scientist has to appeal to other means in order to fuel an experimental engine capable of unmasking abiding lies. The incredible counterforce comes from the realm of art. This is not new for Nietzsche, but he comes at it from a different angle and with renewed resolve. Gay science assumes a relation to scientificity that is linked to art and play. It at no point derives its authority from institutional divisions or scientific hegemonies but draws the possibility of its vitality strictly from art. Art introduces a vitality capable of hosing down the strictures of morality. The necessarily subversive force of art and play challenges the stability of morality as we know it, and, when in concert with science, repels those recodifications slavishly beholden to moralistic descriptions.

Platonic and Christian perspectives on morality block the scientific impulse for a number of reasons. Among these, Nietzsche cites the fear instilled by Plato and the Christians of *falling* (into sin, error, shame), which, to his mind, has petrified our brain power. Given these restraints, which are palpable even today, Nietzsche asks that we consider the over-severe demands we place on ourselves. We have become "virtuous monsters and scarecrows."⁸⁰ The stiff upper lip has stiffened mind's native plasticity, weighing us down. With the fool's demotion in the life of thought, play was banished and art was sent to its room. The rest of humanity was left stranded and anxious, pinned to hardened places. "We should be *able* also to stand *above* morality – and not only to *stand* with the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling any moment, but also to *float* above it and *play*. How then could we possibly dispense with art – and with the fool? – And as long as you are in any way *shamed* before yourselves, you do not yet belong with us."⁸¹ Importantly, that which opposes slipping and falling is not figured as standing erect – this would set us up only to get cut down, goading us so far as only to see ourselves plunged into the abyss of endless reversal. Nietzsche opposes slipping with floating and playing. The liberatory exhortation marks the end of Book Two, when the gay scientist acknowledges "Our ultimate gratitude to art." From where Nietzsche sits – rather, from where he floats – there would be no science without art, in part because we would have all committed suicide.

Art trains us for science, making its scandalously uninhibited observations palatable. Art has given us a *taste* for science. These developing taste buds are important since without them science's collaboration with the untrue would provoke severe nausea: "If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science – the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation – would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance." Under the notion of invention, Nietzsche places the cult of the untrue, which we welcomed in its appearance as art. If art was invented for us, it was in order to heal us from the persistent wounding of necessary error and delusion. Art cooperates at a level of inoculation by administering general untruth in order to immunize us against untruth. As a time-released protection against nausea and suicide, art is not so much *dead*, but its truth – the realization of general untruth – now gets retransmitted through science which, hardly opposed to art, was prepared for by the arts. In sum, without the inoculation that art has prepared for us, science would kill us. Thanks to art, Nietzsche suggests, we can now genuinely welcome science the way one welcomes the future. Hence, to cap it off: "Nothing does us as much good as a *fool's cap*: we need it in relation to ourselves – we need all exuberant, floating, dancing, mocking, childish, and blissful art lest we lose the *freedom above things* that our ideal demands of us."⁸²

Still, the two moments profiling the genealogical narrative of close relations have unhappy precedents. Nietzsche would not want art to have prepared for science the way the Old Testament is said to have prepared us for the New Testament: he wants to avoid creating a history of warring texts and referential fallout. In fact, he reverses the effects of the reciprocally promising texts by making art in the end *indispensable* to science and not a matter of the fiction of a surpassable past. There is no intervening conversion theorem to help supplant one with the other; instead, a salutary tension installs the tenuous embrace of related, nonidentical entities. As with every couple that rises out of metaphysics, one of the terms, however, is more explicitly exposed to its own vulnerability than the other. So, even the Gay Sci leaves it possible to see art as having fur-

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nished a mere entry to the more sublime effects of science, and, while it would be easy enough to trace a history of put-downs that have accrued to art (Hegel didn't actually put art down – he just put it away, thereby conserving it in his sense), the standing of science appears to be such that it cannot be simply depreciated. A few Romantics attempted to devalue science, but not without a good deal of deference to its mineralogical backwaters, electric charges, and mystical antecedents.

Nietzsche needs science for another reason: it is understood to be nothing less than the contemporary manifestation of evil. Here we might also invoke evil in the French sense of *le mal* – a malignancy, an index on a first level of unhealth and injury, as well as in the moral sense of unwholesomeness. Science would proffer the other *fleur de mal* to art's special capacities for indulging evil. Nietzsche's word on evil, which necessarily encompasses its bad, "degenerate" meaning, may be difficult to swallow, and sometimes it does not get off the ground or get beyond itself, much less beyond evil and good – a risk that he accepts. Nietzsche at no point merely wipes the slate clean but considers evil from the multiple sides of its possible manifestations, with the many lenses of discursive or nondiscursive formations. Evil does not always declare itself in the brilliant efflorescence of Mephistophelean insight, the worthy other to the great deity's specular locutions. Evil can fall further (if it is still a matter of falling) than even the devil and leave traces of unaccountable destitution, irrecoverable anguish. Even the Christians cannot salvage such a degree of wreckage with only the usual redemptive schemes and recuperative sketches. These types of considerations, Nietzsche's work reveals, have taken up residency with science.

The type of questions and urgencies directing the landing patterns of evil in our day can no doubt take one far afield of philosophical proprieties or indulge the worst complicities of phantasm and political organization, destructive sociality and ethical forgetfulness. Discursive safety hazards increase with the intensity of the probe. Still, if Nietzsche's example can be followed – though this remains a dangerous proposition – it becomes ever more necessary to go to sealed off areas and condemned sites, to stay on this side of evil before presuming to get beyond its borders, a movement that Nietzsche traced with terrible care. Following Nietzsche into his abysses, one has to risk pushing the limits of decency in order to locate the test site, an increasingly evolving world-arrangement

Science -
evil,

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'Babel'

that cannot be excused from answering for the diverse forms of malignancy it everywhere produces. Nor can one simply condemn such a site as if an indictment would explain anything of its essence or begin to dismantle its effects. These effects range wide and near, so that mappings become as intrusive as they are accommodating to a shifted ordering of things, to the creation of new world orders and the accelerated decreation of world. Our bodies have become test sites in an era of prolific malignancy.

Having named and introduced the epochality of testing, he puts everything out there – his name, his body, his dwellings, friendships, the love affairs that could not happen, his sister's social experiments. The good, the bad, the ugly. Food: how one becomes what one eats. It's all in there, but, for the most part, the paraconcept of testing is his special way of getting at evil. *The Gay Science* is itself a test site. It begins with the supposition, in the preface, that his book may need more than one preface in order to launch it. The book begins by faltering, by testing and striking itself out. And very swiftly, in Book One, he addresses the species' experience of what is different and new as the experience of evil. One would like to call for a strict historicity of reading in this context, if that were possible, because what Nietzsche has to say pinches the ears and hurts one's eyes. Yet I would be renegeing on the deal if I were to overlook, or skip hurtful passages.⁸³ Nietzsche went there, and I am going in there with him, in an effort to read on double or triple registers the before and afters, though such markers fail to account for our experience, precisely, of evil. Even so, there is some difficulty in presenting evil as such, which is something Hannah Arendt implies in her articulation of the "banality of evil," suggesting that the as suchness of evil can best be arrived at allegorically, according to elaborate axiomatics.

If it is possible to say so, Nietzsche works his thought between a good and bad evil. He denounces bad or reactive evil when he gets on anti-Semitism, for instance. The clearing made by productive evil is something altogether different, it seems: this mien of evil arrives on the scene of historical stalemate as a teacher. For the pre- and anti-Nazi (though ever recruitable) Nietzsche, the strongest and most evil spirits in the history of humanity have kept the species alive, or at least they have "so far done the most to advance humanity: again and again they relumed the passions that were going to sleep – all ordered society puts the passions to

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sleep – and they reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried; they compelled men to pit opinion against opinion, model against model.”

Usually by force of arms, by toppling boundary markers, by violating pieties – but also by means of new religions and moralities. In every teacher of what is new we encounter the same “wickedness” that makes conquerors notorious, even if its expression is subtler and it does not immediately set the muscles in motion, and therefore also does not make one that notorious. What is new, however, is always evil, being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary makers and old pieties; and only what is old is good.⁸⁴

The evil of novelty is brought about by the more subtle warrior, the one who heralds new moralities and religions. Bound in concept to the use of force, the overthrowers of old pieties take more time to get their points across and achieve their dominations. At this point, the way Nietzsche aligns the allegory of the experimental disposition with evil is what commands our attention. For the age of experiment leaves nothing alone and messes with the species’ sense of time. The individual risks being clocked out by the insinuation of a mechanical world order – a substratum of evil that Nietzsche charges with meaning.

Book One addresses the time span of genuine experimental endeavor, which must not be limited to the experiences of one lifespan but should punch in a different time clock such that it coincides with Nietzsche’s tracing of the history of the species. It is an error to condense the resolution of any task posed by science to the lifetime of the individual. Time, including the time of thinking, takes on another quality, as the species moves into a kind of dog time, where things accelerate and need to slow down at once. In “Loss of Dignity” Nietzsche warns that “we think too fast”; “we require little preparation, not even much silence: it is as if we carried in our heads an unstoppable machine that keeps working even under the most unfavorable circumstances.” Well, the dog has to go. But keep the leash. The dog as timekeeper has morphed into an insensible machine. There was a time, the philosopher continues, when someone who was preparing for a thought could be spotted: this person “set his face as for prayer and stopped walking; yes, one even stood still for hours.”⁸⁵ The speedup of thinking, an early sign of the technologization

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of the human relation to the surrounding world, produces machinal effects that, having no off switch, remain indifferent to unfavorable conditions. No freshness, no renewal, no fatigue – no despair, no love. This is the wiped out, worn down, extinguished personality plugging away.

The machine, part of the experimental setup, is cast negatively in another passage as well. This time, rather than proving unstoppable, it is hard to start up. It is the figure of noisy disjunction, weighty and clumsy – the very opposite of the cheerful lightness imputed to the gay scientist: “In the great majority the intellect is a clumsy, gloomy, creaking machine that is difficult to start.”⁸⁶ In both cases, when Nietzsche takes recourse to the machine, it is in order to designate the deficient lab of a single intellect, working on autopilot, disconnected from futurity. Isolated and operating autistically, the machine cranks up the question of intergenerational research, that is, it glitches onto a notion of research that breaks the individual’s time frame.

Whatever men have so far viewed as the conditions of their existence . . . has this been researched exhaustively? The most industrious people will find that it involves too much work simply to observe how differently men’s instincts have grown, and might yet grow, depending on different moral climates. It would require whole generations, and generations of scholars who would collaborate systematically, to exhaust the points of view and the material. . . . If all these jobs were done, the most insidious question of all would emerge into the foreground: whether science can furnish goals of action after it has proved that it can take such goals away and annihilate them; and then experimentation would be in order [und dann würde ein Experimentieren am Platze sein] that would allow every kind of heroism to find satisfaction – centuries of experimentation that might eclipse all the great projects and sacrifices of history to date. So far, science has not yet built its cyclopic buildings; but the time for that, too, will come.⁸⁷

Having obliterated the goals we thought we had in sight, science is called upon to draw up new maps and charters, to assign new timers and set the metronomes of doing. History, which is dependent on sacrificial economies and the compulsive call of great projects, frees up the space of its binding narratives. Instincts have grown, Nietzsche offers, driving us into other areas and creases of being. In this passage, which announces the advent of experimentation as an age beyond ages, Nietzsche works the

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problem of channeling heroic urges into what I am calling the modern test drive. A special feel for the scientific task to which the drive attaches requires that it be viewed neither as finite nor infinite but, more accurately, as *transmortal*.

Every kind of heroism would be satiated by the transgenerational chain of experimentation, which does not exclude war among its links but channels warlike aggression to the point of sacrificing the sacrifice and eclipsing the transcendently tinged project. Nietzsche does not offer a graspable content for such a transmortal research system that would outrun history and its presumed casualties. He calls it into being, gives it a sketch and a place as that which replenishes the sudden void of its own annihilations. He understands the dangerous rush that occurs with the removal of God and Goal, the ensuing depression of instincts and the unpredictable violence of a collapsed morality. Having proven capable of deconstructing “goals of action,” can science refurbish them? Experimentation supplants the Goal, the collapse of telos and history, without escaping the precariousness that used to be associated with goals of action. Thought would no longer be bound to truth or falsity but turned into the interpretations and evaluations of nonfinite experiments, summoned by interpretations of forces and evaluations of power.

Nietzsche asks what happens to the operations of sense-making and historical credibility following the destruction of the sacred and sacrifice as we have known and needed them. More precisely, he asks, evading the extortions of essence, *who* will be there to assure the transition? We know what Nietzsche understands by the personality of the experimenter: an unprecedented daredevil, a risk-taker whose risks are sometimes calculated but who has drawn in the aleatory margin to such an extent that the distinction between risk and prudence cannot always be properly measured. In “Preparatory human beings,” Nietzsche writes of those who can harvest energy from existence and know how “to *live dangerously!* Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors as long as you cannot be rulers and possessors, you seekers of knowledge! Soon the age will be past when you should be content to live hidden in forests like shy deer. At long last the search for knowledge will reach out for its due; it will want to *rule* and possess, and you with it.”⁸⁸ We recall as well his announcement that, with experimentation, “all the daring of the

lover of knowledge is permitted again.”⁸⁹ The exhortation, famously recycled in our day, to live dangerously, tries to root out the knowledge seeker from the hermit’s habits and habitations, from the willed ignorance of the ascetic priests and social conformists of a prejudicial morality. The species of knowledge seeker that Nietzsche concocts is hard to imagine – a knowledge seeker shot through with his brand of “virility,” at once on the edge and self-restrained, capable of ruling and beholden to the strictest forms of obedience, brutishly tough and aristocratically mannered, a hardened soldier and a pregnant woman. This knowledge seeker, this scientist, has submitted to the severity of service, to the unrewarded exigency of constant weighing and judging: “the most difficult is demanded and the best is done without praise and decorations. Indeed, what one hears is, as among soldiers, mostly reproaches and harsh rebukes; for doing things well [*das Gutmachen*] is considered the rule, and failure [*das Verfehlte*] the exception; but the rule always tends to keep quiet.”⁹⁰

The uninitiated tremble before the “severity of science,” which “has the same effect as the forms and good manners of the best society: it is frightening for the uninitiated.” The severity of science cultivates a kind of bonsai of mannered beauty – or maybe it would be metaphorically more fruitful to recall that Nietzsche was a committed equestrian and appreciated the noble restraint of the nervous horse, the tact of a powerfully trained charger. From where Nietzsche stands and looks, science has a decision to make. It can continue to turn in copies of what has been, showing submission to the colder climes of pain and gain, or it can break through to another experience of joy. In the end, it can turn up the heat on both ends of pain and pleasure, choose to promote one of both ends, or diminish the intensity of the whole scale of affects. Science has the power to choose what it will do for us. “To this day you have the choice.” If you decide for as little displeasure as possible . . .

and desire to diminish and lower the level of human pain, you also have to diminish and lower their capacity for joy. Actually, science can promote either goal. So far it may still be better known for its power of depriving man of his joys and making him colder, more like a statue, more stoic. But it might yet be found to be the great dispenser of pain. And then its counterforce might be found at the same time: its immense capacity for making new galaxies of joy flare up.⁹¹

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The trajectory that Nietzsche foresees is an interesting one: until now, science has held the scepter of deprivation.⁹² Hence, perhaps, our *desire* for science. Its future holds strong possibilities for dispensing pain. Only after tracing such a future does Nietzsche open the case for joy, as antidote and counterbalance to science's capacity to wield pain – as a responsive, possibly even reactive force. But to reach new galaxies of joy – one among other possible goals offered – Nietzsche must retain a principle of selection; he discards much. He consistently pits acts of discarding against the pain of deprivation, placing joy beyond the punishing smacks of desire.

STOP! Let's roll this back a minute. Something, or someone, was left out. The severity of science, writes Nietzsche, has the same effect as the form and good manners of the best society: "it is frightening for the uninitiated. But those who are used to it would never wish to live anywhere else than in this bright, transparent, vigorous, electrified air – in this virile air."⁹³ What has happened to Nietzsche's manners in this passage? Why does he fold in the good manners of the best society with virility? Did the mention of good manners, usually on the effeminate side of the gender fence, provoke a defensive reaction-formation? Where does it belong in Nietzsche's thought on testing, and why does virility share the same outlet as electricity? In the service of rigor, we must continue to press the point of indwelling misogyny, even though for Nietzsche and me there are virile women and Nietzsche's soft butch preferences are sometimes quite explicit. Perhaps the misogynist cast of his remarks will obsolesce with time, perhaps in any case it cannot be regarded as essential to the notion of testing. Perhaps I am getting too hysterical. These are many perhapses. Nonetheless, it seems dishonest to hide the symptomatic return of misogynist traces in these contexts: testing invites frequencies that rant of virility, even in the form of the most commonplace expressions, such as occurs in the syntagmas, "test your strength," or, "testing your mettle." Is the mark of sexual difference a contingency of testing, or is Nietzsche aiming at other performative feats?⁹⁴ Tests in and beyond Nietzsche tend to penetrate to some reserve of interiority, even as they challenge limits. Staving off penetration, some of the designated objects of the test's probe resist its finality or aim, prompting notorious rounds of self-testing, like the Lady of the troubadours (the troubadours sign off *The Gay Science*). They withhold knowledge, defy presentation. Feminine

Ha!

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silhouettes of veiling, hiding, movements of retreat take over the metaphors and practices of testing. Something is held off or held back. The IQ test, too, gathers prestige as a secret store of essential intelligence, holding the true key to a mythic measure of intelligence. Invasive and no less imperious, the test as remnant of historical inquisitions gets the truth out of you. Even the Turing test, which searches for an operational way to approach a question, opens on the problem of sexual difference. It is played with three people: a man (A), a woman (B), and an interrogator (C) who may be of either sex. The interrogator stays in a room apart from the other two. The object of the game for the interrogator is to determine which of the other two is the man and which is the woman. While Turing's legacy appears to transcend such entanglements, the Turing test, as meta-test, depends on the ability to tell apart at least two of the posited genders. In terms of its many permutations, testing appears to belong to the registers of masculinist anxiety; still, must it necessarily reproduce effects of sexual difference in the majority of its protocols, practices, and effects? I am going to let this slide for the moment, with a mere citation, because Nietzsche's dossier is, as we have seen in the discussion of *Beyond Good and Evil*, quite complicated. Sometimes I'm tired of cleaning up after him. That's for sure. For the moment, we have no direct line to the problem of the misogynist rant in science, at times well concealed but not all that often, really. In the case of Nietzsche, to be fair and honest, one has to travel a little farther to make it through the wind tunnels of irony before making any assured pronouncements or thinking one has stabilized the Nietzschean utterance once and for all.

PROVISIONAL REJECTABILITY The jubilant opening of Book Four marks the beginning of a new health. Nietzsche bounds back from failing health, ready to reboot, and opens the new site with a poem in honor of Sanctus Januarius. The poem is dated and placed commemoratively: January, 1882, Genoa. "With a flaming spear you crushed / All its ice until my soul / Roaring toward the ocean rushed / Of its highest hope and goal."⁹⁵ Starting from scratch, the philosopher opens the new chapter with the miraculous occurrence – associated with St. Januarius – which he does not dissociate from science. The miracle, as mark of joy that cannot be scientifically accounted for or dispelled, honors a concept of life that had been formerly quashed. Nietzsche dedicates his work, "For the