**no ambivalence towards testing leads to the worst atrocities.**

**Ronell\_\_2005** (Avital Ronell [Prof of German, comparative lit, and English @ NYU]; *The Test Drive.* 5-7)

Whether you mean to prove that you can do it, or we are driven by what Maurice Blanchot calls "the trial of experience” and he submits himself endlessly to Nietzsche's loyalty tests, or she is a runaway replicant whose human factor is being scrutinized, or the sadistic coach has us revving up for an athletic contest; whether you are entering college, studying law, or trying to get out of an institution; whether they are giving you the third degree; whether you are buffing up on steroids, or she had unprotected sex, or he doesn't know what he has but he's fatigued and nauseated; whether they have to prove their mettle or demonstrate a hypothesis or audition for the part, make a demo, try another way, or determine paternity; whether you roll back to the time of the Greeks who first list their understanding of *basanos,* or to the persecution of witches and press forward to push out the truth in the medium of torture and pain: **it seems as though everything - nature, body, investment, belief - has needed to be tested**, including your love. **What is the provenance of this need to torture, to test? A link between torture and experiment has been asserted ever since** Francis **Bacon; yet, what has allowed acts and idioms of testing to top out as an essential and widening interest, a nearly unavoidable *drive?* A kind of questioning, a structure of incessant research - perhaps even a modality of being - testing scans the walls of experience; measuring, probing, determining the "what is" of the lived world**. At the same time, but more fundamental still, **the very structure of testing tends to overtake the certainty that it establishes when obeying the call of open finitude. An unpresumed fold in metaphysics, testing -** that is, the types and systems of relatedness that fall under this term - **asserts another logic of truth**, one **that subjects itself to incessant questioning while reserving a frame, a trace, a disclosive moment to which it refers.** There is nothing as such *new* about the desire bound up in the test; yet **the expansive field or growing promiscuity of testing poses** novel **problems and complicates the itinerary of claims we make about the world and its contractions**, the shards of immanence and transcendence that it still bears. Our contract with Yahweh, whether piously observed or abominated, involves the multiplication of test sites. Shortly after completing his *Critique of Judgment,* Kant, in response to a public questionnaire, examined the problem of testing the faith of theology students.'-Can faith be tested or is it not the essence of faith to refuse the test - to go along, precisely on blind faith, without ground or grade? Or again, perhaps the Almighty Himself has proven time and again to be addicted to the exigencies of testing. If God can be said to have a taste for anything, then it may well be located in the incontrovertible necessity of the test. No one is not tested by God, at least by the God of the Old Testament who showed a will toperpetual pursuit, perpetual rupture. Even the satanic beloved, who got away or was kicked out (depending on whether you are reading the satanic version of Goethe or God), became a subsidiary testing device for the paradisiacal admissions policy. In German, *Versuch*unites test with temptation - a semantic merger of which Nietzsche makes good use. **The devil is the visible mark of a permanent testing apparatus. It is one name for an operation that engages the frazzled subject in a radical way**. **The figure of the test belongs to what Nietzsche saw as our age of experimentation**, Nietzsche's work can be seen to pivot around different appropriations of testing, and it is for this reason that I want to look at it more closely while tracking the phenomenon that appears to have flown beneath philosophical radars. Even **where testing is mentioned in contemporary thought - the astounding commentaries of key theorists and philosophers tend to make mention but not use of the term's potentialities - it does not necessarily become an object of inquiry or a field of discovery**, of anxious discrepancy. Husserl steps on the brakes at a moment when the question of testing emerges in his reflections on science; in any case, he swerves around Nietzsche, nearly hitting him but leaving him unmarked in the *Crisis.* Nietzsche, for his part, introduces the experimental turn in the most personal among his books, *The Gay Science.* Still, the last philosopher being and becoming who he is (that is, according to the ticking of the eternal return: Nietzsche, ever becoming who he will have been) at once announces and denounces this emergence. **We must never lose sight of the Nietzschean ambivalence toward experimentation**. With his future-seeing night goggles and his sensitive little radar ears **he sensed that test sites would make the wasteland grow and foresaw the concentration camp as the most unrestricted experimental laboratory in modern history, a part of the will to scientific knowledge.'**