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At Noon: (Post)Nihilistic Temporalities in The Age of Machine-Learning Algorithms That Speak

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Abstract

This article recapitulates and develops the attempts in the Nietzschean traditions to address and overcome the proliferation of nihilism that Nietzsche predicted to unfold in the next 200 years (WP 2). Nietzsche approached nihilism not merely as a psychology but as a labyrinthic and pervasive historical process whereby the highest values of culture and founding assumptions of philosophical thought prevented the further flourishing of life. Therefore, he thought nihilism had to be encountered and experienced on many, often opposing, fronts to be fully consumed and left behind. Thus, just as Nietzsche captured the subtle reinventions of nihilism in new forms in his time, in the new does assumed behind new deeds (WP 488), this article focuses on the contemporary tectonic shifts brought by digital technology and challenges subjectivation and narrativization of algorithmic will to power in human-like interfaces such as ChatGPT. Having identified philosophers and himself as the most advanced nihilists in their overvaluation of truth, in the 4th part of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche grappled with the difficult, perhaps impossible, temporality of post-nihilistic historicity that oscillates between highest creativity and highest truths, especially in the sections entitled The Shadow and At Noon whereby he explored new temporal techniques to evade the relapses into temporal nihilisms of the notions of linear progress or eternity (TSZ, 4). By drawing on this juncture, this article offers ways to address transfigurations of nihilism behind new technological performances of subjectivity. The article points toward creative temporalities beyond narrativity and subjectivity insofar as the statistical operations and probabilistic estimations of language-models exceed grammatical construction of meaning. This multifaceted application of his thought on the contemporary ontic reality is necessary to perceive our comet's incalculable movement as a veritable ray of sunshine.

Keywords: temporality; nihilism; machine learning algorithms; subjectivity; narrativity

Temporal subjectivation

“Through thought the ego is posited; but hitherto one believed as ordinary people do, that in “I think” there was something of immediate certainty, and that this “I” was the given cause of thought, from which by analogy we understood all other causal relationships; However habitual and indispensable this fiction may have become by now—that in itself proves nothing against its imaginary origin: a belief can be a condition of life and nonetheless be false.” (WP §483)²

New media in becoming *social* had to go through subjectivation and shape *users'* temporality as a crucial component of the constitution of digital subjects. From the beginning, this

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²Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Ed. Walter Kaufmann. Vintage, 1968.

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material interpellation had subjectivating effects.³ Subjectivating power is different from the exercise of power through subjection insofar as the former relates to the affect, unconscious, and desire compared to the latter which is an imposition of form on a supposedly mute body from outside as in subjection to law, authority, force, and so forth.⁴⁵ Take Facebook or Twitter, the temporality of the feed is entangled with the pulse of the users and their need and desire to be in touch with the liveliness of the present. Technical time is at the forefront as algorithmic social media feeds derive and add rhythm to everyday life. Their design offers a new format through which to remember and memorialize the past. Yet, with the image and text generators, such as DALL-E or ChatGPT, digital media's interest in time turned subjectivating vectors in another direction.⁶ Different than conditioning *social media user's* continual temporal emergence through the relational dynamism of the platform that includes a computationally calibrated rhythm of flow of content, (ar)rhythmic notifications that activate attention, new visual and narrative forms—endemic to the social media platforms—that hold meaning in duration and make bodily affect socializable; temporal subjectivation now works directly on data: Machines are creatively speaking and painting.⁷ In the performance of subjectivity, the potential of data is actualized, and thereby, temporalized—not only through the customized user profile, but also through the machine persona.

Thus, while critical theory was attuning to the *aesthetic* quality of the measuring activity of machines displacing human's presumably exclusive capacity to be creative;⁸ now we have machines that act like creative *subjects* instrumentalizing the availability of massive amounts of data drawn from the endless series of patchy social situations.⁹¹⁰¹¹ Then, the point is not necessarily the accuracy of machine-learning algorithms in their speech acts nor the aesthetic *worth* of visual compositions—as humans are not famous for being consistently accurate or brilliant in their performance of humanity. The point is new media is normalized and socialized through technological forms and performances that imitate, mirror, and appropriate an image of subjectivity.^{12,13} With text and image generators, subjectivation of data is not located at the level of user-profiles where nonhuman capacities

³ For a discussion of 'structural causality' that grounds my conception of subjectivating-effects see Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. Routledge, 2013, pp. 7-13.

⁴ See, Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Pantheon. 1978, pp. 137, for his seminal account of the shift in in the status of 'life' within the horizon of political technologies.

⁵ See Aretxaga, Begoña. *States of terror*. University of Nevada Press, 2005, for a critique of Foucauldian disinterest in unconscious trauma and fantasy in the analysis of political violence.

⁶ Throughout the paper, I develop a distinction between the aliveness of the diffused, decentered, and environmental technologies that condition and enable users' activity and new tools/interfaces that *perform* subjectivity by employing first-person voice or by bringing forth finished artwork. This article addresses the ambiguity and implications of such performances of subjectivity. See also Milliére, Raphaël. "Deep learning and synthetic media." *Synthese*, VI. 200. 2022.

⁷ Srivastava, Aarohi, et al. "Beyond the imitation game: Quantifying and extrapolating the capabilities of language models." arXiv preprint arXiv:2206.04615, 2022.

⁸ Clough, Patricia Ticineto. "Computational Aesthetics in The Practices of Art as Politics." In *The Routledge Companion to Art and Politics*. Routledge, 2015, pp. 222-9.

⁹ Stewart, Kathleen. "New England Red." *Non-Representational Methodologies*, edited by Philip Vannini, Routledge, 2015, pp. 19-33.

¹⁰ Clough, Patricia Ticineto, and Talha İşsevenler. "Worlding Worlds with Words in these Times of Data-fication." *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, Vol. 5, no. 4. 2016, pp. 6-19.

¹¹ Galloway, Alexander R. "Golden Age of Analog." *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 48, no. 2. 2022, pp. 211-32.

¹² Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse: Foundations of Critique of Political Economy*. Vintage, 1973, pp. 690-95.

¹³ Heidegger, Martin. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 9, 105, 348.



are channeled into customized social media feeds, but machines are occasioned separately as conversational partners or artistic collaborators.

In this conjecture, Nietzsche's explorations of the faith in subjectivity as one of the pillars of nihilism where founding categories grounding identity, subjectivity, and values lead thinking to nothing and life to self-destruction are worth recalling (GM, III 28).^{14 15} Along with his thoughts on subjectivity in general, I will also examine how in giving a testimony of himself in *Ecce Homo* and *Zarathustra*, he dealt with his own subjectivity. It is this relation to self and its temporality that are most important to explicate the paradoxical character of the role played by subjectivity in the way machine-learning algorithms are normalized. In the following sections, I develop an approach to the temporality of this contradiction by examining Nietzsche's tale of a euphoric, noontime nap under a grapevine where subjectivity and its dissolution are coterminous.

Oscillation

Now you've slept yourself out, for how long? Half an eternity! Well then, well now, my old heart! How long after such a sleep will it take you to wake yourself out?

(But then he fell asleep anew, and his soul spoke against him and resisted and laid itself down again) – “Let me be! Still! Didn't the world become perfect just now? Oh the golden round ball!” (Z, IV Noon)¹⁶

In an earlier article on *the Agonist*, I conceptualized that in establishing new continuities by serializing digital content and users, algorithmic social media feeds express a new kind of *temporal power*.¹⁷ I argued that this new relation of power invests in both identity and non-identity insofar as the social media feeds operationalize the nonhuman temporalization of data flow that has the allure of being an extension of the user's subjectivity in the promise of customization. As it performs both fine-tuning and continual erasure of subjective identity, I placed this political technology at the end of a long genealogy of techniques of power that relies for its growth on a system of displacement and disavowal. In displacing and externalizing temporalization to the nonhuman agencies, I suggested that algorithmic power conducts ‘the end of witness’,¹⁸ i.e. subjects' ability to give an account of their operation¹⁹ and auto-affection²⁰ as the self-founding act of subjectivity.

Here in this essay, my goal is to attend to the temporality of this contradiction whereby *necessary but false* images of subjectivity are gaining ground through new text and image generators. Nietzsche thought to distribute different elements of this formulation, i.e. necessary-but-false, to different moments instead of canceling them out in a higher synthesis which would implicitly call for an end of time of subjectivity. Instead, he

¹⁴ Brown, Wendy. “Wounded attachments.” *Political Theory*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1993, pp. 390-410.

¹⁵ Russell, J. “Nietzsche, Psychoanalysis, Nihilism.” *The Routledge International Handbook of Psychoanalysis and Philosophy*. Routledge, 2023.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 223-5.

¹⁷ İssevenler, T. *An event-without-witness: a Nietzschean theory of the digital will to power as the will to temporalize*. *The Agonist*, Vol. 16, no. 2, 2022, pp. 86-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 91-3.

¹⁹ Nichanian, Marc; Philip Gerard. “The Sovereign, the Survivor, the Last Man.” *Critical Times*, Vol. 6, no. 2, 2023.

²⁰ Clough, Patricia Ticineto. *Autoaffection: Unconscious thought in the age of teletechnology*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

embraced a repetitive daily image of eternity where consciousness and dream, subjectivity and environment, beautifully oscillate through one another. Of this temporalization of contradiction, he wrote towards the end of his active years: “I contradict as has never been contradicted before and am nevertheless the opposite of a No-saying spirit. I am a bringer of glad tidings like no one before me” (EH Destiny).

There is certainly a strong resonance with this image of thought and our mediated time where daydreaming has become the *productive* norm of the domestication of subjectivizing technology through radio, television, and finally social media. Sociologically speaking: “The pyramidal model of management of energy-forces is replaced by a smooth (uninterrupted) space of undetermined flows through which capitalism reaches ‘absolute speed’.”²¹ The disciplinary worktime and the time spent on the logistics that make possible work—reproductive processes and the commute from one place to another, from one tab/app to another on the same screen—is continuously threaded with the time of reveries, imaginative flight, and scrolling through the flow of content moved and quasi-subjectively embodied by algorithms. Famous for bringing sociological analysis from lofty social structures down to the protocols of everyday interactions that reproduce the commercial realism that glues intersubjective discourses together,²² Erving Goffman, albeit in passing, attends to the reveries as durations that make up indefinite stretches of time, almost completely split from the inquiring gaze of scientific studies:

“... these flights are characteristically short and not very well organized, although, of course, an individual may spend a great deal of time thus engaged. (Surely the total number of manhours a population spends per day in privately pursued fantasy constitutes one of the least examined and most underestimated commitments of its resources.) Note, daydreaming presumably occurs in the mind, there being little outward behavioral accompaniment, overt signs of talking to oneself being the principal exception.”²³

The paradoxical making and unmaking of subjectivity out of temporalities of machine-learning algorithms occur through the mode of daydream where the body is less individuated and given to the phantasmatic opening provided by the creative and aesthetic activity of the machine-learning algorithms which are able to perform speech-acts thanks to their constant estimation of the most *probably* accurate choice for the next word out of a large data-set of permutations. There is phantasy because the subjectivity of the machine, in its performance of speaking in the first person, as in OpenAI’s ChatGPT, is both a mutually sustained illusion and experiential reality with concrete effects—in Winnicott’s terms, it’s a *potential space* that preserves imaginative capacity, constitutive of subjectivity, alive.²⁴ By giving freer rein to the unconscious, (day)dreaming erases the bounded and individuated sense of the body created by the conscious ego as consciousness creates a definite point of view on the environment.²⁵ Instead, the stillness and lack of conscious direction and intention imply that the materiality of the body, albeit still with some mental activity, is in a more or less fused relation with the materiality of the environment.

²¹ Parisi, Luciana. *Abstract sex: Philosophy, bio-technology and the mutations of desire*. Continuum, 2004.

²² Clough, Patricia. *The End (s) of Ethnography*. Peter Lang, 1998, pp. 97.

²³ Goffman, Erving. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press, 1974, p.52.

²⁴ Ogden, Thomas H. “On potential space.” *The Winnicott Tradition*. Routledge, 2018, pp. 121-33.

²⁵ See Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Fall of Sleep*. Fordham Univ Press, 2009.



Curiously, as noon divides the day into two halves, Nietzsche lays bare the dissonant multiplicity of experience by imagining race toward the fulfillment of multiple needs. As we will see in the extract below, the most pressing is the exhaustion from movement (the distance between *animal* and *plant*), then thirst (the tension between *organic* and *inorganic*), and then, there is the eternal rest of mental activity (*nous*) which does not get tired of contemplating the beauty of Being.^{26 27}

At the hour of noon, however, as the sun stood directly over Zarathustra's head, he passed by an old crooked and knotty tree, embraced by the luxurious love of a grapevine and hidden away from itself; from it hung abundant yellow grapes, trailing toward the wanderer. Then he got a craving to quench a slight thirst and to pluck himself a grape; but when he had already stretched out his arm to do so, then he got an even stronger craving to do something else, namely to lie down beside the tree, at the hour of perfect noon, and to sleep. This Zarathustra did; and as soon as he lay on the ground, in the quiet and secrecy of the colorful grass, he quickly forgot about his slight thirst and fell asleep. For, as Zarathustra's proverb says, one thing is more needful than the other. Only his eyes remained open – because they did not tire of seeing and praising the tree and the grapevine's love. (T, IV, Noon)

The sleep/daydream at Noon is the duration in which folded contradictions are unfolded, if only temporarily, discontinuously in the fraction of a whole day, and for a while, there is a felt experience of understanding. This sense of understanding is in line with what recent psychoanalytic literature calls *mentalization*²⁸ which is a bodily-oriented intersubjective achievement distinct from *intellectualization*²⁹ which is seen as a strategic defense against wounded bodily dependency.

Unconditional honest atheism ... is the awe-inspiring catastrophe of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the lie involved in belief in God. (GM III 27)

Nietzsche definitively operated within the historical ontology of German philosophy where time is conceived as an internal to the Being and it is not viewed as the external condition within which Being manifests as in Newtonian time where Time is external to force. Yet, in the temporality of Being, he did not only recognize a progressive movement—as in for instance the methodological atheism that European conscience finally achieved (GM II 20)—but also interrelated with it, catastrophes, accidents, and oblivions—equality; absurd equations of good, true, and beautiful; and conversely bad, powerful, false. His commitment to intellectual honesty required holding to contradiction instead of releasing the tension induced by such contrasts through easy solutions of side-picking or averaging qualitatively different figures, values and problems. Klossowski offers

²⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Regnery publishing, 1996.

²⁷ See also the chapter entitled “The Soul That Never Sleeps” in Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Fall of Sleep*. Fordham University Press, 2009 and Clough's situating of sleeplessness within the context of governmentality in Clough, Patricia Ticineto. “Philosophy and family violence.” *Objects and Materials: A Routledge Companion*, 2014. 156-61.

²⁸ Allen, Jon, and Peter Fonagy, eds. *The handbook of mentalization-based treatment*. John Wiley & Sons, 2006.

²⁹ Winnicott, D. W. “Mind and its relation to the psyche-soma.” *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. 27, no. 4, 1954, pp. 201-9.

a rare reading of Nietzsche's subjectivity, in the aftermath of the writing of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and not only his work in isolation, which is worth quoting at length.

All that remained of Nietzsche himself was the face and the voice, which were lent to the two authorities presiding over the loss of his own unity: a double theophany was being expressed through Nietzsche. The extraordinary tension this required, however, never seemed to exclude from Nietzsche's consciousness the enormity of abruptly switching his allegiance from Dionysus to the Crucified, and vice versa...Nietzsche never seemed to lose sight of his own condition: he simulated Dionysus or the Crucified and took a certain delight in the enormity of his simulation. The madness consisted in this delight. No one will ever be able to judge to what degree this simulation was perfect and absolute; the sole criterion lies in the intensity with which Nietzsche experienced the simulation, to the point of ecstasy.³⁰

Thus, any culmination in Nietzschean time can only be temporary, discontinuous, and *secular*—not eternal. One might add that climaxes are not even historical as we see a turn from history to day-to-day, a turn away from Wagner and grand theatres to Chopin and Turin's cafes in his last active years. Deeply impressed by Dostoyevsky and anticipating Freud, he moved increasingly from philosophy to psychology; and from psychology to physiology (GM I 10, III 13-14). He expressed this shift most powerfully in the sketches of a series of philosophers, writers, and musicians offered in *The Twilight of Idols*. Thus, it is important to note that the method of genealogy, a veritable product of the temporal focus of his thinking, is not a type of intellectual history. In terms of an analysis of temporality, this meant a growing focus on bodily affects and needs (weariness, pain, suffering, intoxication, sleep, etc.) as well as daily life and habits where metaphors of climate and diet are more frequently employed (EH Clever).^{31 32}

At Noon

This brief scene excited me to the point of delirium. I was undoubtedly not able to explain it myself fully and yet I was sure of it, that I had seized the moment when the day, having stumbled against a real event, would begin hurrying to its end. Here it comes, I said to myself, the end is coming; something is happening, the end is beginning. I was seized by joy.

Maurice Blanchot, *The Madness of the Day*

Nietzsche did not view nihilism as merely an external threat to be cautioned against. He experienced nihilism as his own—to some extent, *necessary*—condition in his own overvaluation of truthfulness (to the danger of subordinating, if not disavowing, creativity) and his increased sensitivity that precludes the incubation period required for a great work (WP 63, 543). The modality in which he approached nihilism was not just discursive-philosophical as in 'negation,' nor socio-practical as in 'avoidance,' nor even impersonally

³⁰ Klossowski, Pierre. *Nietzsche and the vicious circle*. University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 234.

³¹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals & Ecce Homo*. Vintage, 1989.

³² Klossowski, Pierre. *Nietzsche and the vicious circle*. University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 127-8.



scientific as in ‘examination.’ Prefiguring an important Nietzschean Georges Bataille, we must understand his relationship with nihilism as one of consumption.

(...) a movement that in some future will take the place of this perfect nihilism—but presupposes it, logically and psychologically, and certainly can come only after and out of it. For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals—because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these “values” really had. (WP, Preface §4)

This immanent and temporally punctuated and differentiated experiential approach to nihilism is what should be adopted in considering the utility and affordance of the concept for contemporary socio-material conditions. In fact, Nietzsche grappled with the temporality of *afterness* during the last phase of his written production. What did his own work demand from him? How can he be positioned in time? How can he move forward from the experience of nihilism if this movement and its implications he foresaw and *consumed* are yet to arrive and be registered? Noon will be a figurative solution to this temporal problem.³³ A climax that is daily arrived and daily left behind.

“Oh sky above me,” he said, sighing, and sat upright. “You’re looking at me? You’re listening to my strange soul?... When will you drink this drop of dew that has fallen upon all earthly things –when will you drink this strange soul – when, well of eternity! You cheerful, dreadful noon abyss! When will you drink my soul back into yourself? (Z, IV Noon)

Indeed, the feeling of untimeliness has become a central philosophic and affective problem. Departing from other philosophers such as G. W. F. Hegel who saw a culmination of world history in the contemporary European culture and more precisely in their very personality and book insofar as these embodied conclusive actualizations of Reason, and therefore Being, Nietzsche thought about his position through a personal—though a similarly historical, yet thoroughly asynchronous—sense of time.

“a philosopher and solitary by instinct, who has found his advantage in standing aside and outside, in patience, in procrastination, in staying behind; as a spirit of daring and experiment that has already lost its way once in every labyrinth of the future; as a soothsayer-bird spirit who looks back when relating what will come; as the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself.” (WP, Preface §3)

We notice as temporal dispositions, in this introductory note to the planned work of *The Will to Power: The Revaluation of All Values*, not only the recurring theme of *untimeliness* but also its coupling with patience and procrastination, as he had to wait, while also getting ahead by exploring all the labyrinthine proliferation of nihilism that will occupy the culture in the next two centuries. This plural temporality cannot be solely viewed as untimeliness, as a mere sense being out of sync. There are creative returns to and departures from the

³³ Lyotard, Jean-François. *Discourse, figure*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

present, which I would call *musicality of thought* in so far as we witness a conceptual orchestration of a multiplicity of processes.

Having written the first three volumes of Zarathustra as a single book, he first conceived what would later become the fourth volume of Zarathustra as a separate book entitled “Noon and Eternity.” This succinct articulation transfigures and transcribes the opposition of becoming and being into a veritable temporal plane.

Stand back! Hot noon sleeps on the meadows. Do not sing! Still! The world is perfect. Do not sing, you winged bug in the grass, oh my soul! Do not even whisper! Look here – still! Old noon is sleeping, he’s moving his mouth: didn’t he just drink a drop of happiness – ... — an old brown drop of golden happiness, golden wine? It flits over him, his happiness is laughing. Thus laughs – a god. Still! — (Z, IV Noon)

Having reached *noon*, through Zarathustra, he had to face with the question of repetition. Instead of figuring the dynamic temporality through *Dawn*, now we have *Noon* and *Twilight* as time-images laying bare the discontinuous and often ambiguous/overlayered temporality of climactic experience which is surrounded by a Sisyphean cycle of daily repetition amidst a world that has yet to experience the full sway of nihilism. He had yet to become *The Sun* through disciples-to-come instead of an awe-inspiring comet with an incalculable movement.³⁴

Under the grape-vine

“Man’s tragedy, Nietzsche said, is that he was once a child.”

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

This repetitive temporality of *Noon* implies a Freudian process of *working-through*³⁵ by a series of returns of the past experience insofar as there is more potential in his thinking and himself as an event than he had uncovered. His achievements, as far as their future implications go, are not transparent to him either —as *On the Genealogy of Morals* open: “We are unknown to ourselves.” Thus, Nietzsche did not consider himself to be a transparent finality even if he considered himself to be destiny (EH Destiny). Subjectivity, for instance, had to be assumed and occupied as a position in order to unleash all the psychic and physiological investment in this concept —operative in science, politics, and culture—so that they are available again for the growth of life. In this approach, the goal is not anymore falsification but understanding situational functionality of what’s otherwise invalid.

“...when I desired honey I merely desired bait and sweet ooze and mucus, for which even growling bears and odd, surly, evil birds lick with their tongues: ... – the best bait, as it is needed by hunters and fishermen. Because if the world is like a dark jungle and a pleasure garden for all wild hunters, to me it seems even more, and preferably, an abysmal rich sea...” (Z, IV, Noon)

³⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of Greece*. Regnery Publishing, 1998, pp. 100-1.

³⁵ Freud, Sigmund. “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on The Technique of Psycho-analysis II).” *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Volume XII. The Hogarth Press, 1958, 147-56.



If he fully experienced nihilism and left it behind what's left to do is a series of games where his subjectivity, stripped of resentment and nihilistic habits, can grow in an "innocent and cynical" (WP, Preface §1) engagement with his environment which will offer him with new cases of nihilism to taste and chew. Thus, the first section of the 4th volume of Zarathustra opens with a mischievous scene where Zarathustra 'squanders' his happiness for his work, for trial, experimentation, and play. From then on, for him, life becomes a game of heights.

Perhaps, in this daydreaming relationship with machine-learning algorithms that compute our probabilities beyond our conscious register, we are also playing with the continual emergence and disappearance of our own subjectivity. It becomes harder to distinguish sleep and its dream-state from waking-life insofar as these times are often overlaid and co-present in bodies habituated to the digital milieu. Georges Bataille thought subjectivity as sovereign only in the aesthetic activity of the one that "measures up to that measureless catastrophe under the threat of which are living. This is because he always lives rather as if he were the last human being."³⁶ There is a threat of *measureless catastrophe* because the value of the category of subjectivity (i.e., humanity, 'man') whose erasure is underway is incomputable. Yet this is a conditional proposition. This measureless destruction/deconstruction, which is also an act of consumption, as Nietzsche conceived his relationship to nihilism, can be done aesthetically which gives a measure to unmeasurable. Then, (post)nihilistic temporality is an experience of being the last of our kind when we measure up to that consumptive process with our willing aesthetic participation. Here, 'the last one' not only means the one who drags the ending further away but also the one who brings this end. This one not only carries the last memories of being a human but also forgets them in the momentary daydream at Noon and experiences a transfiguration.

He gives rise to an interest, a tension, a hope, almost a certainty, as if with him something were announcing and preparing itself, as if man were not a goal but only a way, an episode, a bridge, a great promise.— (GM II 16)

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³⁶ Bataille, Georges. *The Accursed Share: The History of Eroticism and Sovereignty*. 429. Zone, 1993, pp. 429.

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