

NICHOLAS
THURSTON

Historia
Abscondita

An Index
of Joy

Compiled from Friedrich Nietzsche's
'The Gay Science'

Translated by Walter Kaufmann

PUBLISHED IN 2007 BY

Information as Material

HISTORIA ABSCONDITA¹

(An Index of Joy)

BY

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FIRST EDITION

YORK
2007

¹Concealed, secret, or unknown history.

What good is a book

AN INDEX OF JOY



Every great human being exerts a retroactive force: for his sake all of history is placed in the balance again, and a thousand secrets of the past crawl out of their hiding places—into *his* sunshine. There is no way of telling what may yet become part of history. Perhaps the past is still essentially undiscovered! So many retroactive forces are still needed!

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Manufactured in the United Kingdom

ISBN: 978-0-9553092-6-7

“These word lists stand as signposts to an intellectual terrain recoverable only speculatively, through indexical trace. Nietzsche the author is long vanished from this text, which is based upon a posthumous translation of *The Gay Science*, and the loss of history that is a central theme of that book becomes enacted in this *Index of Joy*. All we have is what is left behind... A conceptual work that enacts its polemical operations through a deceptively simple device, Nicholas Thurston’s *Historia Abscondita* uses visual and material references to call forth the associative process through which the impossible task of recovery is provoked.”

—Johanna Drucker, University of Virginia

Historia Abscondita selects its title, format and purpose from amongst Friedrich Nietzsche’s “most personal of all books”, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. (“*la gaya scienza*”). Without a word of his own, Thurston dances with Nietzsche to the song of his aphorisms, re-reading possibility into his classic challenges through a subtle conceptual appropriation.

The index of Walter Kaufmann’s canonical English translation provides a site and concealed syntax that Thurston opens anew. The past, present and future influences, on and of Nietzsche, become conceptually unbound. This book allows the new relations of alphabetised coincidence that emerge to remain joyously unstable.



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ISBN 978-0-9553092-6-7

U.K. £5.98

U.S. \$12.00