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Nietzsche and the New Science of Life

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Nietzsche's views on science inform his views on life. Yet, approaching Nietzsche's concept of life through the sciences requires a prior clarification of his complex views on science. In this essay, I propose some elucidation of these views built around a separation between the first instalment of 1882's *Gay Science* (GS) (books I to IV) and book V added with the Preface in 1886.

I. Science and Love in the Texts from 1882

Science

Throughout the first instalment of *GS*, Nietzsche represents science as an antidote to morality. Consider the first mention of science in *GS* 33: "Why should man be more mistrustful and evil [*böser*] now? Because he now has—and needs—a science."

Science opposes the morals of good and evil [*böse*] and that is why we "need" it. This is reiterated in aphorism 37, where he calls "errors" all the morally-driven utilizations of science found in Newton, Voltaire and Spinoza. Against them, Nietzsche argues that science and morals are incompatible insofar as they come to opposite conclusions. The "honesty" of science provides near-pure "facts", and this factualism short-circuits all the false interpretations and "prejudices" which support religious discourse and morals¹.

However, in the relentless self-overcoming at play in *GS*, it seems that Nietzsche initiates a shift in his views on science in books III and IV. There, science is still praised for its ability to unmask moralistic prejudices but, Nietzsche suggests, it also needs reforming along three lines:

-The experimental sciences must overcome their mechanistic tendencies (*GS* 112).

- The distinction between science and morals is now only a difference of degrees (e.g. *GS* 114).

-Thirdly, the object of science must now shift from studying the things to studying "our relations to things" and to "ourselves" (*GS* 246 ff.).²

“Let us introduce the refinement and rigor of mathematics into all sciences as far as this is at all possible, not in the faith that this will lead us to know things but in order to determine our human relation to things. Mathematics is merely a means for general and ultimate knowledge of man.”

Accordingly, the famous aphorism 319 announces that science must become a reflective exercise:

“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.”

Love

Coinciding with this re-examination of science, is Nietzsche’s introduction of a key concept for his later philosophy, *Amor Fati*:

“I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things [*das Nothwendige an den Dingen*] then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor Fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: someday I wish to be only a yes-sayer” (GS 276).

In this first formulation of *Amor Fati*, Nietzsche insists on two things that will gradually vanish from his thought: the necessary is presented as “*what* is necessary in the things”, that is to say, a *certain portion* of what Nietzsche calls “the things” (i.e, reality). Secondly, Nietzsche still reserves the right to “look away”, that is to say, he maintains some room for preference and discrimination within “what is necessary”. This presents only a weak version of *Amor Fati*, as the wistfulness of the final line testifies: “someday”, Nietzsche says, he will achieve a stronger form of *Amor Fati*. This first characterization makes *Amor Fati* a local form of affirmation, attached to the things in particular, not to any “fate” in general.

It is remarkable therefore that in the first four books of GS, all the references to love and to science are made from the factualistic point of view. Science is promoted because it proposes facts that oppose the claims of morals (even though it is not essentially opposed to it) ; and love is not yet a general acceptance of all things *just because they are*. On the contrary, it is a case of what Daniel Dennett dismisses as “local fatalism”³, a case by case acceptance of facts not because they are, but because they are *necessary*⁴.

Science and Love

Interestingly, Nietzsche himself brings together his promotion of science and the local fatalism expressed in his first formulation of *Amor Fati*. In the famous GS 335, he writes:

“We, however, *want to become those we are* (...). To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of *everything that is lawful and necessary* in the world: we must become physicists in order to be *creators* in this sense.” (my emphasis)

Here, Nietzsche returns to the terms he used in his announcement of *Amor Fati* in aphorism 276: physics will tell us *what* to love, because it will tell us what is necessary. Local fatalism indeed!

For authors like Solomon⁵ and Clark, local fatalism is all there is to *Amor Fati*. For Clark in particular, not everything is necessary so not everything is Fate, therefore not everything must be loved. Thus, she says, it remains possible to prefer “a” fate over another. In her discussion of the relations between *Amor Fati* and eternal recurrence, she writes: “I see no evidence, she says, that Nietzsche’s ideal person would have to choose this exact life over a similar one in which Hitler was aborted”⁶.

Here, we cannot help but be reminded of Zarathustra’s anticipation of this argument, and of his gruff response: “They meet an invalid, or an old man, or a corpse—and immediately they say: ‘Life is refuted!’ But they only are refuted, and their eye, which seeth only one aspect of existence”⁷.

Indeed, not only life cannot be refuted (something Clark would accept), but Nietzsche, at least after GS, insists that judging *any* aspect of life leads to denial *in general*. How has Nietzsche come from the local fatalism of the *Gay Science* to an affirmation that fatalism can only be a *general* attitude? I think that the solution is to be found in the development of the remarks made on science in GS II and III, where it was revealed that science should direct its efforts no longer towards the things, but towards our “relations” with them.

II. Overcoming Judgment in the Later Texts

Asceticism in Science

The entirety of book V of GS is a hunt after the “shadows of god” and all the invisible remains of the religious spirit in which the dead god lives on. Among them, science is first. In GS 343, after establishing the theme of book V, Nietzsche confesses that, even if we are “godless” (now that god is dead), we are “still pious” [*fromm*], because we believe in scientific truth. Science, Nietzsche laments, “rejects subjectivity” because its presuppositions are not scientific but moral. The problem, Nietzsche says, is that science relies on “metaphysics,” an affirmation of the “real world” (that is, a “backworld”) against the “only world,”⁸ which is the world of life. Unlike his previous

position, which emphasised the differing *conclusions* of morals and religion, Nietzsche's now insists that science and morals have a common *structure*, and therefore, that we must be suspicious of science too.

Yet, this aphorism seems to leave too much unexplained. In particular, we may ask: why sharing a *common origin* with morals constitute an objection to science?

One answer to this question lies in texts written later in the same year and included in *the Genealogy of Morality (GM)* III, 24. There, Nietzsche refers to the aphorisms from GS V as an anticipation of his present discussion. The link is obvious: both texts reveal that all knowers possess *faith* in science, and on this basis, both texts reject the will to truth characteristic of both the scientist and the priest.

First of all, Nietzsche writes that the scientist always displays "that stoicism of the intellect which, in the last resort, denies itself the 'no' just as strictly as the 'yes', that *will* to stand still before the factual, the *factum brutum*."⁹

It is worth noticing the stark contrast between this passage—which rejects the scientist's obsession for the *factum brutum*—and the earlier GS 99 which declared that the "sense for hard facts", was the privilege of the higher souls. It is also remarkable that this text echoes GS III's emphasis on the necessity to focus the inquiry on the subject's *relationship* with things and on their subjectivity. Here like in GS, III, Nietzsche regrets that the scientist is unable to engage with reality insofar as his scientific practice deprives him of a 'yes' or a 'no', which are, the two modes of existence of human subjectivity. In this type of science, Nietzsche continues, there is only "asceticism."

In this passage Nietzsche draws our attention to the continuing connection between his ideas on science and his fatalism by making a remarkable allusion to his doctrine of fatalism, a doctrine of which science only offers a local, parodic version. Consider the end of the description of the scholar *qua* ascetic priest: "...the *factum brutum*, that fatalism of *petits faits*, [*petty facts*] (ce *petit fatalisme* [*petty factualism*], as I call it)."

So this text from *GM* presents us with a web of four concepts: local fatalism, scientific factualism, two-worldliness and asceticism. Against this compound, Nietzsche brandishes his own version of fatalism, based on the refusal of the local view. In order to understand what he expects from this opposition, we must understand further the reasons why he associates these four concepts in the first place.

For Nietzsche, all four of these concepts represent different aspects of what he calls objectivity. *Asceticism* is the self-denial of the will; we find it in the scientist because their "*petty factualism*" leads them to deny themselves the right to interpret those facts (and interpretation, Nietzsche repeatedly asserts, is an expression of one's will¹⁰). *Two-worldliness*, as GS 344 suggests, results from the opposition between a world of "truth" (the "real world"), and a world of interpretations (the "only world"). Since Nietzsche asserts that truth can only be said of stable objects, that is to say, of *facts* and *things*¹¹, this is a clear indication of the relatedness of "local fatalism" and objectivity.

Against Objectivity

So, it seems that Nietzsche's later critiques of science take place within a general critique of objectivity and that objectivity must be opposed for two reasons:

-Firstly, it eludes the "relations between us and the things."

-Secondly, it divides reality into entities, which are called facts or things.

For Nietzsche, this makes science helpless against the new object of Nietzsche's attacks: no longer morals in particular but the very structure of valuation in general.

At this point, it may be worth recalling the Kantian context in which Nietzsche is operating. In Kantian terms, what Nietzsche is complaining about are the distortions brought about by our acts of *judgment*. Judgment, for Kant, is responsible for the "syntheses of recognition,"¹² that is to say:

a) Judgment "isolates" areas within the flux of sensations.¹³

b) Judgment "subsumes" these syntheses under concepts, in order to present perception with *objects*.¹⁴

This provides the context for Nietzsche's famous and repeated critique of Kant's thing-in-itself (a critique engaged—not insignificantly—at the end of *GS*'s book IV's aphorism 335 quoted above). For Nietzsche, the problem with the "thing-in-itself" is the implication that there is a *real* distinction between the world of the observer and the world of the object of observation. In 1886's *Beyond Good and Evil (BGE)* 11, Nietzsche connects his critique of Kant with his critique of objectivity. Like in *GM* and *GS* V, he links the problem of the two-worldliness of science with science's inability to consider the appropriate object of enquiry: not "what things (including faculties) are?", but again "what is our relation to things?" I think that this strict parallelism between Nietzsche's treatments of science and of Kantian metaphysics is a clear indication that Nietzsche's critique of science, morals and metaphysics all take place within a general critique of judgment which now needs disabling. Nietzsche is seeking his own "*epokhé*".

General Fate

The rejection of the "petit fatalisme" in *GM*, III, 24 shows how Nietzsche's new claim that scientific and moral reasons rely on judgment involves that fatalism becomes general just as the focus of science becomes re-directed towards the subject-object relations, in the same way as fatalism was local when science was objective (until Book IV of *GS*). This parallelism invites us to investigate in more detail Nietzsche's later thinking on fate.

First of all, let's look at Nietzsche's rejections of "local fatalism". After *GS*, 276, all the utterances of *Amor Fati* make it clear that the object of *Amor* cannot be local. In 1888, Nietzsche writes:

“Seen from above and in the light of a superior economy, everything is necessary, and also useful in itself—not only should one bear it, one should love it... *Amor fati*: this is the very core of my being”¹⁵

This passage is a direct result of Nietzsche’s recognition in the same year that the Great type of man invented by Goethe

“...stands in the middle of the world with a cheerful and trusting fatalism in the belief that *only the particular is loathsome*, that everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole—he does not negate anymore”.¹⁶

Only the “particular” is not necessary, therefore not subject to affirmation, but we know from the previous passage that nothing should be regarded as truly “particular”. On the contrary, all separation is arbitrary. This means that overcoming moral judgment must involve overcoming the local view, which involves overcoming conceptual judgment. Here, Nietzsche treats value judgments (“loathsome”) and the isolating conceptual activity (“particular”) together, showing how conceptual judgment is a condition for moral judgment¹⁷. This connection between the two forms of judgments, Nietzsche suggests, was already affirmed—to opposite effect—by Kant. Indeed, Nietzsche goes on to declare that Goethe’s affirmation of reality has an “antipode”: Kant.

“What [Goethe] wanted was *totality*; he fought against the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will (—preached in the most forbiddingly scholastic way by *Kant*, Goethe’s antipode), he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself... In the middle of an age inclined to unreality, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said yes to everything related to him.”¹⁸

Note the final colon which establishes an equivalence between reality and “everything related to [oneself]” for this equivalence furthers Nietzsche’s anti-Kantian project to create a science of “our relation to the things”.

Love versus Judgment

In these texts, fatalism and *Amor Fati* are used by Nietzsche interchangeably. Remarkably, in some other texts from the same period, Nietzsche uses even the concept of *love* in a similar sense. Love, he suggests, is a cure for objectivity, and for all sorts of judgments, it is the chosen path towards a ground situated beyond judgment¹⁹. With love, it seems Nietzsche has found his “*epokhè*”.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, Nietzsche famously—and beautifully—suggests that love overcomes *moral* judgment: “What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil.”²⁰ And in 1886’s book V of *GS*, he already wrote: “Love, thought in its entirety as great and full, is nature, and being nature it is in all eternity something immoral.”²¹

Even if it remains to be clarified in which sense love is meant here, it is a clear indication that Nietzsche regards it as a possibility of circumventing moral judgment.

In the same years, Nietzsche also thinks of love in opposition to *conceptual* judgment, to the point that objectivity is defined as the antipode of love: “Objectivity=lack of personality, lack of will, incapacity for love.”²²

In order to achieve the “great” fatalism that Nietzsche promotes, we must overcome all forms of judgment. For Nietzsche, a privileged way to achieve this is love. This is, I think, indication enough that we must now clarify the relations between love and fate and therefore, *Amor Fati*.

Love and Fate

It has often been argued²³ that Nietzsche re-motivated the traditional categories of love as “*Philia*”, “*Agape*” and “*Eros*” inherited from the Greeks and re-worked by Christianity. It is correctly emphasised by the same authors that Nietzsche differs from the Christian and Platonic traditions in his preference for *Eros*²⁴. However, such readings overlook the fact that Nietzsche writes about love in two different senses. The first one, which is most often emphasised, roughly accommodates the traditional categories. It is love (whether “*Eros*”, “*Agape*” or “*Philia*”), which has an object, be it God²⁵, a friend²⁶, a lover²⁷, family²⁸, the Motherland²⁹, the truth³⁰, or even an enemy³¹. Here, love is meant in the sense of the feeling that determines a relationship with an object assumed to be real and independent.

The second sense of love is more specific to Nietzsche, and I think, more interesting. It becomes prominent after the introduction of *Amor Fati*, suggesting that the concept of *Amor Fati* induced a transformation of the in Nietzsche’s concept of love. This love is love *without object*. In this perspective, loving is defined by a pathos, the state of the lover, no longer by a loved object or person. Nietzsche initially expresses this by insisting that even in object-directed love, the object is inessential, and even inconsequential. In 1886’s *BGE*, he writes: “From time to time, we embrace some arbitrary person (because we cannot embrace everybody) for reasons of brotherly love.”³²

Here, the love is truly for “everybody”, that is to say, its object is indeterminate, and, more importantly, love *precedes* the encounter with its object (no one knows “everybody”), which opens up the possibility that love could exist irrespective of its object. Consider this other remark from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z): “It is true: we love life [*wir lieben das Leben*], not because we are used to living [*Leben*], but because we are used to loving [*Lieben*].”³³

Love, like all instincts, is a spontaneous expression. It is not aroused or determined by its object. In *BGE*, Nietzsche takes stock of this fact and simply leaves the object of love *out* of the structure of love: “Ultimately, it is the desire, not the desired, that we love”³⁴.

If love is self-directed, it involves the lover but not the loved one (Nietzsche fondly quotes Goethe—again—as early as *GS*, 141: “If I love you, is it your concern?”). This explains why Nietzsche conceives the “great” and “noble” love as an act of self-

affirmation on the lover's part, sometimes even as selfishness³⁵. In short, Great Love is love *a priori*.

Therefore, we can say that love satisfies the two requisites posited by the critique of objectivity: (a) love overcomes both moral and conceptual judgment and (b) it affirms the subject over the object, thereby offering a cure to asceticism. Here, it becomes clear that the generality of Nietzsche's later concept of fate (fate as the entire fabric of reality) corresponds to the non-objectivity of his later concept of love (love as independent from its object). This requires of us to investigate the articulation of love and fate.

Fate

A preliminary remark we must make about fate pertains to its grammatical structure. Nietzsche uses *Fatum*, *Schicksal*, *Verhängnis*, *Loos* or derivations of these to describe fate. Of all these, only *Loos*, which Nietzsche rarely uses in the sense of fate, has a purely local sense.³⁶ All the other terms are commonly used in German to describe *both* one's fate³⁷ or destiny, *and* fate as a general element or as "*grosse Ökonomie*".

One advantage of this grammatical ambivalence is that it places the concept of Fate in the vicinity of other key Nietzschean concepts which likewise apply both to the individual and to the fabric of the world in general: "Nature", "Existence", and most of all "Life". This is to say: fate, like these concepts, refers to existence only insofar as it is the *encounter* of an individual with the general. Indeed, no one uses the word fate if it has no one to be the fate *of* and yet no one uses it to refer to something entirely dependent from the subject either (this would amount to equating fate with freedom). On the contrary, for Nietzsche, fate presents itself as an alternative to the object-directedness in objectivity, and thus it achieves the new project assigned to science in GS: to move our focus from the things to our *relationship* with them. The hypothesis I wish to put forward here is that Nietzsche's preference for the term "fate" instead of "reality" or—even worse—"being," is informed by the necessity to escape the division between the local and the global, the individual and the general, the inside and the outside, and eventually, the subject and the object, which are all affirmed by objective thought.

III A Science of Ambiguity

Ambiguity

As a result, I wish to propose that it is the *ambiguity* of the term Fate which Nietzsche is trying to grasp in his texts on fate: "fate" formulates the ambiguous articulation of the local and the global and for Nietzsche, this articulation is the ground of life. Let us remember the striking aphorism of GS, V, 373, entitled "*Science as Prejudice*" where Nietzsche repudiates science's "mechanism"³⁸ for its inability to

grasp the “ambiguity” of “existence”: “Above all, one should not wish to divest existence of its rich *ambiguity*,” with “ambiguity” characterised in the next paragraph:

“Would it not be rather probable that, conversely, precisely the most superficial and external aspect of existence—what is most apparent, its skin [*Haut*] and making-sensible [*Versinnlichung*—would be grasped first—and might even be the only thing that allowed itself to be grasped?”

Ambiguity is “superficiality” and “externality,” therefore, it is “skin”, the interface between the self and the world, which is both *my* surface and the place where the world becomes “graspable”. Ambiguity, Nietzsche suggests, is the place where *the* world transforms into *my* world through perception. In Nietzsche’s barbaristic terms, ambiguity is *Versinnlichung*, that is to say, the *process-by-which-the-things-become-sensible*, a process which is the object of Nietzsche’s new science.

According to GS 373 therefore, one form of the ambiguity of existence is the interlacing of the inside and the outside across the surface of our body (“skin”). The skin is ambiguous because it represents altogether the separation *and* the possibility of the encounter between me and the world. For Nietzsche, this separation-union is what is “grasped first.” That is to say: it is this surface that *constitutes* the inside and the outside, and further, the subject and the object and not—as the traditional metaphysics have it—the other way around. The reasons for this are developed in Nietzsche’s elaboration of the concept of incorporation.

Incorporation

In GS 110 Nietzsche had inaugurated the all-important concept of “incorporation” [*Einverleibung*], which he initially applies to the concept of truth before developing it into a key concept for his physiology³⁹. As a biological concept, incorporation is presented in connection with the will to power. In 1883’s Z, Nietzsche announces that “all life is will to power”: “Where I found the living, there I found will to power.”⁴⁰

Further, he describes the basic *modus operandi* of the will to power as incorporation:

“Life is not the adaptation of inner circumstances to outer ones, but will to power, which, working from within, incorporates [*Einverleibt*] and subdues more and more of that which is ‘outside.’”⁴¹

The basic relationship between the inside and the outside is incorporation, that is to say, conquest. I have argued above that this relation is also called “Fate”. So, Nietzsche says, fate is incorporation. In WC, after saying that love is “cynical, innocent, cruel”, Nietzsche writes:

“—Such a conception of love (the only one worthy of a philosopher) is rare: [...] They imagine that they are selfless in it because they appear to be seeking the advantage of another creature often to their own disadvantage. But in return they want to *possess* the other creature...”

Here, Nietzsche paints Great Love in the colors of incorporation, it is fundamentally a desire to “possess the other creature”. So the equivalence between *fatum* and incorporation extends to love as well. If this is true, we must now examine in what sense incorporation is related to ambiguity.

Firstly, incorporation makes the relationship between the inside and the outside ambiguous. Consider:

“Sense perceptions projected ‘outside’: ‘inside’ and ‘outside’—does the *body* command here—? The same equalizing and ordering force that rules in the *idioplasma*, rules also in the body when it incorporates [*Einverleiben*] the outer world: our sense perceptions [...] do not follow directly upon the ‘impression’”⁴²

When he writes that sense perceptions are “projected” outside, Nietzsche means that we *take* them to be a testimony of the outside world. This, he says, is a judgment we make for internal reasons only. Although we interpret it as a boundary which *informs* our being, this boundary is in fact only the line along which two drives resist each other. This resistance is always only a changeable phenomenon, which precedes the victory of one drive, and the submission of the other⁴³.

The individual is therefore determined only by the lines of conflict that surround him, lines that are not only always contingent but also whose unending motion (there is no latent power) signifies that it (or some of it) is always incorporating or being incorporated. Consequently, a change in lines means a change in the identity of the individual. Enter the second ambiguity of incorporation.

Nietzsche expresses this second ambiguity by showing that incorporation is not a straightforward affirmation on the part of the incorporator, or a total surrender on the part of the incorporated. On the contrary, incorporator and incorporated merge and transform by way of each other:

“To what extent resistance is present even in obedience; individual power is by no means surrendered. In the same way, there is in commanding an admission that the absolute power of the opponent has not been vanquished, incorporated, disintegrated.”⁴⁴

Here, Nietzsche describes four important features of the mechanics of incorporation:

- a) The inside/outside divide is relative and changeable.
- b) Incorporation, which was thus far conceived as the transfer of a drive from the outside to the inside, also takes place *within* an organism.
- c) Incorporation is not destruction but preservation of the incorporated.

d) Incorporation transforms both the incorporator and the incorporated.

This makes the relations between the subject and the object of incorporation ambiguous in a stronger sense. By virtue of b), organisms must now be thought of as ensembles of organisms *relatively* external to each other. This implies two things:

a) No organism is fully unified (so incorporation takes place *within* organisms too).

b) All organisms can be seen as either wholes or parts of a whole, simultaneously.

Let us now return to the question of love.

Loving as Incorporating and Being Incorporated

Here, the ambiguity informed by the incorporative mode of being of life gains in depth: this ambiguity renders any idea of self-identity absurd (incorporation is continual, so identity through time is impossible), and brings out the ambiguity contained in the self-affirmation which Nietzsche sees at work in love.⁴⁵ As I mentioned before, and as Nietzsche points out constantly, self-affirmation is defined by overpowering, that is to say, incorporation. Yet, incorporation necessarily entails the vanishing of the incorporator's identity. As a consequence, self-affirmation means a *certain form* of self-negation. As early as the third *Untimely Meditation (UM III)*, Nietzsche writes that love deprives us of our identity because it connects the inside and the outside, and overcomes the separation which defines us:

“There are moments and as it were bright sparks of the *fire of love* in whose light we *cease to understand the word 'I'*, there lies something *beyond* our being which at these moments moves *across into it*, and we are thus possessed of a heartfelt longing for *bridges between here and there*”⁴⁶.

This, Nietzsche maintains, is the exact opposite of ascetic self-denial. He writes about Schopenhauer's desire for knowledge: “That is a *disintegrative*, destructive aspiration, yet, it makes the individual *great* and *free*. Perhaps he will perish outwardly from it, not inwardly.”⁴⁷

This “disintegrative aspiration” is the aspiration for a form of knowledge which eludes the subject-object separation that the later Nietzsche seeks to achieve with his new science. It is “disintegrative” because it leads to the vanishing of the separation between the self and the world, and because with this separation, it is the self's identity too, which disappears. Yet Nietzsche differentiates between the ascetic and the healthy disappearance of identity: the former, he says, is a “perishing inwardly”⁴⁸, whilst the latter is “perishing outwardly”, that is to say, a perishing that affirms a higher, external organism.⁴⁹

The latent consubstantiality of the self and the outside, which makes our very “perishing outwardly” possible, was reformulated by Nietzsche in terms of the consubstantiality of the general and the local fate. This allows us to envisage this perishing outwardly as altogether incorporation into a greater whole (disappearance of

the self) *and* an *internal* incorporation on the part of the whole (this is a step towards a unification of drives, i.e. health). It is an internal conflict from the general point of view, and an external one from the local point of view.

If we should therefore not assume a contradiction between those texts from 1874 and the later ones, this means that we must accept that Nietzsche describes love in 1874 in the same terms as he describes Fate later: it is the ambiguity captured by Nietzsche's concept of incorporation. Therefore, we must ask a final question: in what sense can we say that *Amor Fati*, which combines fate and love, is also connected to incorporation?

Amor Fati and Ambiguous Ambiguity

The concept of *Amor Fati* is formulated from a perspective which regards ambiguity as a constant *reciprocity*: the incorporated *and* the incorporator both transform each other, as they move across their former boundaries. In this sense, both benefit from the incorporative act in an agonistic way: the creation of a greater, higher and stronger organism is a promise of a form of further incorporation which is in the interest of both⁵⁰.

It is this agonal relation that determines the very mechanics of incorporation, which *Amor Fati* formulates. I have argued that "Great love" should be conceived as the love of love. I have also argued that fate was determined by the reciprocity contained in its concept (it is the encounter of the general and the local). If it is true that fate is the encounter of the inside and the outside (my "fate" and "fate" in general), and that the basic mode of relation between the inside and the outside is incorporation, which is also the only expression of the will to power, this means that fate and will to power are equivalent.

If love is always love of love and *Amor Fati* is love of fate, then it seems to follow that love and fate are equivalent. In his discussion of Bizet's *Carmen* in 1888's *the Case of Wagner* Nietzsche himself affirms that great love *is* fatum:

"—And finally love, love translated back into *Nature!* Not the love of a 'cultured girl!'—no Senta-sentimentality. But love as fatum, as a fatality, cynical, innocent, cruel"⁵¹.

In his Nietzsche lectures, Martin Heidegger accordingly claims that the will to power must be reduced to the "will to will". This is because Nietzsche consistently characterises life as the will to incorporate *and* will as incorporation (there is no undischarged will⁵² and incorporation is the only mode of discharge). As a result:

"in [Nietzsche's] view there is nothing else than will to power, and power is nothing else than the essence of will. Hence will to power is will to will, which is to say, willing is self-willing"⁵³.

This is, I think ascertained by the equivalence between love and will to power drawn above. Yet identifying desire and love with fate (as incorporation) should not

lead us to conclude that their combination in *Amor Fati* is an unnecessary redundancy⁵⁴.

It is true that the ambiguity at the core of the concept of fate does account for the ambiguous relations of the local and the general: there is “my” fate and there is “Fate” as the general fabric of reality, and they are unified in Nietzsche’s indeterminate concept of fate. On the other hand, the circularity of self-seeking love accounts for the characterization of life as the will to incorporate and of will as incorporation. So it may be argued that love and fate are in fact redundant concepts, and therefore, that *Amor Fati*, is, as it were, doubly redundant. This would be true if Nietzsche’s purpose was only to propose a critique of the concepts of inside and outside (and of self and other and subject and object).

I believe however that beyond a mere critique of these concepts, Nietzsche seeks to accommodate in his doctrine a place for the existence of such errors⁵⁵. These errors, he thinks, indicate an *essential* possibility of the will to power, namely, that it creates errors, and most of all, that it creates *the* basic error: objectivity. Therefore, I think that if Nietzsche insists on *Amor Fati*, it is precisely because the ambiguity he wants to formulate thanks to this concept is *even more* ambiguous than the one I have described hitherto: Nietzsche holds that this ambiguity is *itself* ambiguous. It is an ambiguity which is ambiguous about its own ambiguity: it presents itself as unambiguous and only *Amor Fati* is fit to grasp this “ambiguous ambiguity”. Indeed, the second dimension of ambiguity is not accounted for in any simple affirmation of love or fate.

Amor Fati, on the contrary contains both the tendency towards the affirmation of subject and object (we remember that love affirms the lover, and *presents*—even if it does not actually *aim at*—the object of love) *and* the affirmation that this distinction is erroneous (since fatalism affirms the consubstantiality of all life). This mixture of subjective and objective, of an affirmation of the subject through love and of the object through fate, allows us to achieve Nietzsche’s project to account for incorporation as the mechanism that both constitutes *and* constantly denies the structure of objectivity.

Contrary to the first, one-dimensional ambiguity of incorporation, the “ambiguous ambiguity” which Nietzsche discovers gradually after 1882 is not a stable substance. On the contrary, it is subject to constant turbulence and chaos, caused by its essential propensity for presenting itself as non-ambiguous, and therefore constantly—and indefinitely—shaping itself into semblances of objects and subjects (these too, Nietzsche says, are incorporative acts). In it, the subjective and the objective pole constantly alternate, leading endlessly into one another by way of incorporation, and it is this ambiguous *leading into* which is the focus of Nietzsche’s new science.

If Nietzsche wants a new science of life after 1882, it is because he has *seen* a new life: it is not only the erroneous character of objectivity which is overcome in *Amor Fati*, it is the error of thinking that a life where this error is corrected is possible. For Nietzsche, the object of the new science is our “relation with things”, that is to say the mechanics that account for the encounter of the general and the local (*Versinnlichung*). This object can only be attained by way of one’s locality (one’s fate) because even as the locality (local fate) imperfectly merges within the general (Fate), it

perfectly merges within the true object of its experiment: the merging itself. This knowledge can only be achieved by way of our own being and consequently, the new scientist truly becomes, as Nietzsche wished, her "own guinea pig" (GS, 319), and the knowledge she acquires is the knowledge of the ambiguity which defines "fate", "existence" and "life". Here is what the new science of life teaches: life is the non-objective which presents itself as objective or, better said, it is nothing but *the movement* by which the non-objective presents itself as objective.

Notes

¹ See GS 46, 59, 97, 123 and 178.

² See also GS 300

³ Daniel C. Dennett, *Elbow Room*, OUP, Oxford and New York, 1984, pp. 104 ff.

⁴ In other words, this local affirmation of fate does not yet take stock of Nietzsche's later unification of reality and necessity.

⁵ See Robert C. Solomon *Living with Nietzsche*, New York, OUP, 2003, p. 184, and "Nietzsche on Fatalism and Free-Will", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 23, 2002, pp. 63-88.

⁶ Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1990, p. 182

⁷ Z, I, §9. See also among many others: *NCW*, "Epilogue", §1 and *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a destiny", §5.

⁸ GS 343. See *WP*, 566 [Nov. 1887-March 1888], this is a question that intensely occupied Nietzsche in the second half of 1887. See in particular Notebooks, 8, 9 and 11 of 1887. On the "real world" being an imitation of the world of experience, see also *TI*, IV. See also GS V, 373 entitled "'Science' as a prejudice".

⁹ *GM*, III, 24

¹⁰ e.g. *NF*-1887, 10[138]

¹¹ Notebook 2, 1885-1886, §77

¹² *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 115

¹³ *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Part I, Book I, §3.

¹⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason* A 115

¹⁵ *Nietzsche Contra Wagner (NCW)*, Epilogue, 1, my emphasis. "So wie meine innerste Natur es mich lehrt, ist alles Nothwendige, aus der Höhe gesehn und im Sinne einer grossen Ökonomie, auch das Nützliche an sich, — man soll es nicht nur tragen, man soll es lieben." Kaufmann translates "ist alles Nothwendige" for "everything *which* is necessary," a significantly "local" translation.

¹⁶ *Twilight of the Idols (TI)*, "Skirmishes", 49, first emphasis mine

¹⁷ Interestingly, Nietzsche hints at a common ground between moral judgment and "understanding" in *GS*, IV, 333, where he argues that "judging" (in the moral sense) and "understanding" share a common source.

¹⁸ *TI*, "Skirmishes", 49

¹⁹ *GS*, 380

²⁰ *BGE* 153.

²¹ *GS*, 363

²² *NF*-1887, 9 [165], see also *NF*-1887, 9[156]

²³ See for example: Béatrice Han-Pile, "Nietzsche and Amor Fati," *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2009 pp. 1-38, Robert C. Solomon (op. cit.), 2003; M. A. Casey, "Nietzsche on Love", *Soc.* 45:368–374, June 2008; Babette Babich, "Nietzsche and Eros between the devil and God's deep blue sea: The problem of the artist as actor–Jew–woman," *Continental Philosophy Review* 33: 159–188, 2000; *passim*.

²⁴ See especially, Babich, 2000 and *BGE* 168

²⁵ Yovel, Yirmiyahu: "Nietzsche and Spinoza: *Amor fati* and *amor dei*", in Yovel, Yirmiyahu (Ed.), *Nietzsche as affirmative Thinker*, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff, 1986. See also *BGE*, 67. On the way in which intersubjective love is based on exclusion see also *GS* 14.

²⁶ *GS* 14

²⁷ *GS* 59

²⁸ *NF*, 1886, 4[6]

²⁹ *NF*-1887, 9[156]

³⁰ *GS*, Preface, §4

³¹ *BGE*, 216

³² *BGE* 172

³³ *Z*, I “On Reading and Writing”. It is remarkable that the previous section of *Z*, “On the Pale Criminal”, approaches the same issue, not in terms of love but in terms of aggressivity: our aggressivity is not essentially directed against any specific object, the object is just a point of discharge, a pretext for our instincts which are spontaneously expressed.

³⁴ *BGE* 175 The context leaves no doubt that Nietzsche means “desire” and “love” interchangeably in this aphorism and there is abundance of evidence to the effect that Nietzsche considers love as essentially desire, see for example, *GS*, Book V, 363.

³⁵ See also *NF*-1887, 9[156], *Ecce Homo* (*EH*), “Books” §5, *the Case of Wagner* (*CW*), 2; *GM*, II, 24, and 1888-14[125].

³⁶ See for example, *EH*, “Why I am a destiny”: “I know *my* fate [*Loos*]...” (my emphasis)

³⁷ *BGE* 231

³⁸ The word recurs three times, in italics, in the aphorism.

³⁹ Keith Ansell-Pearson has forcefully established the central role of the incorporation of truth in the economy of Nietzsche’s doctrine as a concept thanks to which Nietzsche applies the spiritual to the physical. See Keith Ansell-Pearson, “The Incorporation of Truth: Towards the Overhuman”, in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, Ansell-Pearson (Ed.), Blackwell, Oxford, 2006, pp. 230-249.

⁴⁰ *Z*, II, 12 “On Self-Overcoming”

⁴¹ *NF* 1886, 7 [9]

⁴² *NF*-1885, 2[92]

⁴³ *NF*-1887, 9[151]

⁴⁴ 11:36[22] 1885. See also *NF*-1885,43[2]

⁴⁵ The incorporation which takes place between organisms and within them too, Nietzsche calls, strikingly, “Love”, as early as *GS*, 14, entitled “*The things people call love*”.

⁴⁶ *UM*, III, 5 My emphases

⁴⁷ 1874-34 [36]

⁴⁸ This will be developed as the “internalization of man” in *GM*, II, 16.

⁴⁹ See *GS* 118.

⁵⁰ At this point, we must remind ourselves that for Nietzsche, the will to power does not seek satisfaction, but incorporation itself. The fact that the incorporator is transformed by the incorporation (which entails that it is always another—a new—organism which “benefits” from the increase in power offered by the incorporative event) is therefore not an objection to this description of the mechanics of incorporation.

⁵¹ *CW*, §2

⁵² *WP* 634/888-13:14[79]

⁵³ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, “The Will to Power as Art”, p. 37

⁵⁴ This is something Heidegger comes close to saying with regard to the will to power, from which he simply amputates the element of power

⁵⁵ 7 [62]1886-1887