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Nietzsche's rejection of stoicism. A reinterpretation of Amor fati

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Chapter 1: NIETZSCHE'S *AMOR FATI*: AN OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon in the secondary literature to see *amor fati* as a Stoic notion. In the Introduction I mentioned Thomas Brobjer and Nuno Nabais, but there are others as well. John Sellars, for instance, observes in Gilles Deleuze's book *The Logic of Sense* a tendency to connect Nietzsche's *amor fati* to Stoicism, and concludes after examination: 'Deleuze's presentation of Stoic ethics as the precursor to Nietzsche's *amor fati* is thus legitimate'.³¹ In a similar vein, Peter Groff finds it 'illuminating to read Nietzsche as a kind of late modern neo-Stoic, providing us with a veritable banquet of spiritual exercises aimed at the cultivation of the self and the affirmation of fate'.³² The connection between *amor fati* and Stoicism is, moreover, not only argued for in the context of ethics and self-cultivation. Nietzsche's concept of the 'eternal return', closely related to *amor fati* according to most commentators, adds another reason to argue for a Stoic background. Groff claims for instance: 'The joyful affirmation of all generation and destruction, for its own sake, willed over and over again, eternally – what could be more Stoic than that?'³³ Likewise, Andrea Christian Bertino stresses the similarities between *amor fati* and the Nietzschean and Stoic doctrines of eternal recurrence: 'Die ewige Wiederkehr schließt für Nietzsche und die Stoiker einen vollen und unbedingten *amor fati* ein'.³⁴

This is not to say that Nietzsche and the Stoics put forward exactly the same ideas both within the domains of ethics and 'physics' (the Stoic expression for what we would nowadays call 'cosmology', 'metaphysics', or 'theology'), nor is this defended by most commentators. As we will see in chapter 2, it is broadly recognized that Nietzsche cannot agree with the Stoic notion of an eternally returning cosmos guided by divine reason and providence. But this obvious difference does not discourage commentators from continuing to see similarities, for instance in the emphasis on ethics in the context of 'fatalism': 'Es handelt sich vor allem um die Nietzsche und den Stoikern gemeinsame Vorliebe für die anthropologische Seite der kosmologischen Gleichung [...], es handelt sich vor allem um ihre kühne Konfrontierung mit den Auswirkungen des Kreislaufs der Welt auf das Schicksal des Menschen'.³⁵ Like Mihailo Djurić, whose lines these are, Aurelia Armstrong argues that Nietzsche endorses one of the 'key Stoic themes', namely 'the Stoic reconciliation of a naturalistic perspective with an ethical

³¹ Sellars, J. (2006a), 165.

³² Groff, P.S. (2004), 154. Ure, M., in Sellars, J. (2016), makes the same point when he writes, 293: 'In ancient Stoic philosophy Nietzsche believed he had found a salutary reminder of an ancient ethic based on pride in oneself and love of fate that stood in sharp opposition to the self-contempt and hatred of this world'.

³³ Groff, P.S. (2004), 159.

³⁴ Bertino, A.C. (2007), 113.

³⁵ Djurić, M. (1979), 9. Quoted by Bertino, A.C. (2007), 112. Nishigami, K. (1993), 226, who has written one of the very few works dedicated on *amor fati* only, similarly claims: 'Sieht man die stoische Affirmation des Fatums [...] genau an, und vergleicht man sie mit Nietzsches "Amor fati" [...], so kann man über die Affinität der beiden geistigen Haltung verblüfft sein, und sie ist nicht zufällig.'

perspective', 'or "fatalism," and *amor fati*'.³⁶ Roy Elveton adds to this that 'both Epictetus and Nietzsche view [the] goal of radical independence and self-mastery as being tinged with a profound fatalism. The Stoic doctrine of *amor fati* is well-known'.³⁷

This thesis aims to unravel the precise relation between Nietzsche's *amor fati* and Stoicism. Elveton's assumption that *amor fati* is a 'Stoic doctrine' will be carefully examined: is Nietzsche's introduction of the term indeed inspired by Stoicism? In order to avoid answering this question on the basis of an anachronistic contemporary account of Stoicism, chapter 2, 3 and 4 will map out Nietzsche's specific understanding and assessment of Stoicism. But first of all, we need to know more about *amor fati*. What kind of concept is it? How does it relate to the eternal return? Is it, indeed, a concept that belongs in the domain of ethics? It may be a 'spiritual exercise' related to 'self-cultivation'; alternatively, it could be the 'ideal' to be attained through these exercises. But what kind of ideal would it be in that case? Looking at the separate elements of the concept, how to interpret 'fate' exactly; what are we supposed to love? Does it include the totality of our world, including its history, or can we select bits and pieces? Should we perhaps just love ourselves, our personal character and history? And what does it mean for Nietzsche to 'love'? Can it be trained like our will (if our will can be trained at all), or is it rather the description of a certain experience that happens to some, but not to all – making the idea of it being a spiritual exercise implausible? Could the occurrence of *amor fati* itself be 'fated'? Is it, then, *not* intended as something to be adopted or strived for?

Significantly, even those commentators who elaborate in more detail on the exact meaning of *amor fati* do not take into consideration the possibility that its exact meaning may shift between 1882, when it is first introduced in the opening aphorism of Book IV of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*FW*), and 1888, when it appears for the last time, not long before Nietzsche's so-called 'collapse'. This is all the more surprising, given the important developments of the years in between. It is then that Nietzsche writes *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Z*, 1882-1885), develops further his 'discovery' of 1881, i.e. the thought of the 'eternal return', and coins the concepts that made him famous: the will to power and nihilism. Also, the reference to Dionysos, which was introduced in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (*GT*) in 1872, reappears again for the first time in *Z* and gains more importance in the works that follow. The so-called 'Middle Period', ranging from *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (*MA*, written between 1876-1879, published in parts in 1878, 1879, and 1880) until *FW*'s Book IV (finished and published in 1882; Book V was written in 1886) is therefore the period that should be looked at closely, as it leads up to the introduction of *amor fati*. Yet, these years are often seen as a rather un-Nietzschean phase, at least in comparison to the more famous texts. The risk of misinterpreting the very first *amor fati* occurrences by using passages of the later Nietzsche is overtly present therefore and should be taken into account.

Consequently, I agree with Stern's remark that 'Nietzsche scholars are far too relaxed about picking and choosing from his different books to construct a version of Nietzsche that suits their particular interests'.³⁸ He admits that this procedure 'would be unobjectionable if his views about some of the key notions associated with *amor fati* (in *The Gay Science*) were not

³⁶ Armstrong, A. (2013), 7.

³⁷ Elveton, R.O. (2004), 194.

³⁸ Stern, T. (2013), 157.

subject to change in the coming years. As it happens, they were.³⁹ Stern is, as far as I have been able to trace, the only commentator in the field who distinguishes between the *amor fati* of 1882 and that of the later years. In this chapter I will argue that he is right. I will trace the development of *amor fati* closely, offering textual analyses of all ten passages (which I numbered) in the context of the time frame and philosophical questions relevant to it. I will present them in five groups, along chronological and thematic lines. The first group discusses the first three passages of *amor fati*, all three situated in 1881/1882. One of these is *FW* 276, the first aphorism in which it occurs in the published works. The basic questions of its conceptual meaning will be introduced here, together with a closer analysis of the three passages. The second section concerns a 1882 letter to Franz Overbeck, which raises the question of the meaning of *amor fati* in the context of religion. The third section concerns a *Nachlass* note in the time that Nietzsche is working on *Z*, which opens up the question of the relation between *amor fati* and this book. More specifically, the dimension of time will be explored here, related to the *Übermensch* and will to power. Fourthly, I will discuss one of the *Nachlass* notes from 1888. The question of nihilism will be discussed as well as tragedy and the Dionysian. The fifth group considers the final four passages, all occurring in 1888. Two of these can be found in *EH*, one in *NW*, one again in the *Nachlass*. The question of the meaning of both love and fate is considered, returning to the questions related to the 1881/1882 passages.

I will not be able to answer all the questions raised above concerning the meaning of *amor fati* in this chapter. What I hope to show, however, is that in order to trace the inspiration of *amor fati* it would be best to focus on the very first passages, which I will do in detail in chapter 5.

1.2 *AMOR FATI* IN 1881/1882: A THERAPEUTIC DEVICE?

Whereas most commentators writing on *amor fati* merely draw a comparison between Nietzsche's philosophy and that of the Stoics, there is one exception. Michael Ure's article 'Nietzsche's Free Spirit Trilogy and Stoic Therapy' addresses Nietzsche's dealings with the Stoics directly and its influence on *amor fati*. Focusing on the Middle Period⁴⁰ he argues that *amor fati* should be interpreted as part of the endeavour to develop a new philosophical therapy. Nietzsche has come to disagree with Stoicism in *FW*, he claims, 'on the grounds that it entails a radical extirpation of the value judgements that underpin the emotions.'⁴¹ Nietzsche therefore attempts to develop a rival therapy, 'one that aims to enable human beings to unconditionally affirm fate but without this affirmation entailing, as it does for the Stoics, the dissolution of all emotional valuations.'⁴² Leaving the question of the accuracy of his evaluation of Nietzsche's relation to Stoicism to chapter 3 and 4, I will focus here on the implications of his argument for *amor fati*. To what extent is *amor fati* intended as a therapeutic alternative to Stoicism, presupposing that Nietzsche 'borrowed from the Hellenistic schools their medical

³⁹ Stern, T. (2013), 158.

⁴⁰ The three books written in that time frame, *MA*, *Morgenröthe* (*M*), and *FW* I-IV are subsumed sometimes under the heading of 'Free Spirit Trilogy' as the idea of the 'free spirit' is prominent in these writings.

⁴¹ Ure, M. (2009), 61.

⁴² Ure, M. (2009), 61.

conception of philosophy and with it the assumption that the purpose of philosophy is to enable us to live well'?⁴³

Looking closely at the three passages in which *amor fati* occurs in this time frame reveals some arguments in favour of an interpretation similar to Ure's. But there are difficulties as well. A first argument can be found in the motto preceding the first occurrence of *amor fati* in the published works, namely in the opening aphorism of Book IV of *FW*.

Sanctus Januarius.

Der du mit dem Flammenspeere
Meiner Seele Eis zertheilt,
Dass sie brausend nun zum Meere
Ihrer höchsten Hoffnung eilt:
Heller stets und stets gesunder,
Frei im liebevollsten Muss: –
Also preist sie deine Wunder,
Schönster Januarius!
Genua im Januar 1882.⁴⁴

Not only do we find here a precursor of *amor fati* in the formulation of 'Frei im liebevollsten Muss', also the phrase 'Heller stets und stets gesunder' indicates that becoming clearer and healthier is the effect of St. Januarius, the one who is praised. But although health is introduced here, there is nothing that suggests that one could choose a specific therapy to attain it. The sentences rather describe a physical process: the 'burning lances' of St. Januarius 'melt the ice sheets of the soul', which then 'speeds towards the ocean'. It makes the soul healthier and clearer, and free, but only in a particular way, namely in loving necessity. This suggests that Nietzsche did not decide to adopt a new kind of morality, love, or therapy. The passage rather seems to praise the unfolding of an inevitable yet liberating process.

The aphorism immediately following this motto introduces *amor fati* in the published works.⁴⁵ Here, too, the idea that Nietzsche puts forward a 'new therapy', as Ure argues, does not seem plausible.

1. *FW* 276 *Zum neuen Jahre*. — Noch lebe ich, noch denke ich: ich muss noch leben, denn ich muss noch denken. Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum. Heute erlaubt sich Jedermann seinen Wunsch und liebsten Gedanken auszusprechen: nun, so will auch ich sagen, was ich mir heute von mir selber wünschte und welcher Gedanke mir dieses Jahr zuerst über das Herz lief, — welcher Gedanke mir Grund, Bürgschaft und Süßigkeit alles weiteren Lebens sein soll! Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: — so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön machen. *Amor fati*: das sei von nun an meine Liebe! Ich will keinen Krieg gegen das Hässliche führen. Ich will nicht

⁴³ Ure, M. (2009), 62.

⁴⁴ 3.521.

⁴⁵ That this is the first *amor fati* passage is pointed out by the '1.' in front of the text. All other texts containing '*amor fati*' are numbered as well.

anklagen, ich will nicht einmal die Ankläger anklagen. *Wegsehen* sei meine einzige Verneinung! Und, Alles in Allem und Grossen: ich will irgendwann einmal nur noch ein Ja-sagender sein!⁴⁶

The first sentences indicate an autobiographical reading: 'Noch lebe ich'. This observation, taking place on New Year's day, expresses a sense of wonder. Nietzsche's being alive should not be taken for granted, apparently. Then, playfully turning around the Cartesian expression 'cogito, ergo sum', an intimate connection between life and thought is underscored. Thinking is not possible when life is absent – in the case of death – but, vice versa, no life would be possible for Nietzsche without thinking. What is more, there is a sense of necessity introduced here as well: 'ich muss noch leben, denn ich muss noch denken'. The necessity in both life and thought, or the connection between the two, might be considered as a possible candidate for what is loved in *amor fati*, connected also with the phrase 'Frei im liebevollsten Muss'. Although the notion of freedom is absent in *FW* 276, it could be argued that love is a liberating passion – even if it does not change anything in the loved situation, and might itself be fated. In line with this, the thought that first came up in this new year (*amor fati*) takes the form of a wish; it 'shall be the reason, warrant, and sweetness of the rest of my life!'. This, too, suggests that *amor fati* is not a certain act or a therapy, or its result. Wishing for it implies that it may appear, while leaving open the possibility that it may not: '*amor fati*: let that be my love from now on!'.

Yet *amor fati* also involves learning more and more to see 'what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them', and in the case of success it would make Nietzsche one of those 'who make things beautiful'. This indicates that the love of fate is bound up with one's agency. The last sentences of this aphorism further describe what is needed. Nietzsche ('Ich') does not want to wage war against ugliness; he does not want to accuse, he does not even want to 'accuse the accusers'. 'Wegsehen' is the only form of negation allowed. He concludes: 'all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer!', suggesting that *amor fati* has everything to do with 'yes' and 'no' saying: it denotes affirmation without negation (except for the negation of 'Wegsehen') – an affirmation that seems active rather than passive.

But even if there is activity involved, this is not enough to conclude that *amor fati* is a kind of therapy. Nietzsche does not directly address his readers in this aphorism, for instance. We should always be careful not to take Nietzsche's references to himself merely autobiographically (the new preface to *FW* reads: 'Aber lassen wir Herrn Nietzsche: was geht es uns an, dass Herr Nietzsche wieder gesund wurde?'⁴⁷). But if there is something at stake that transcends 'Herr Nietzsche', it remains questionable whether this concerns the readers' health and well-being and that *amor fati* is presented as the means towards it.

There are two other passages containing *amor fati* in the *Nachlass* of the year before the publication of *FW*.

⁴⁶ 3.521.

⁴⁷ *FW* Vorrede 2 3.347.

2. NL 15[20] Zuerst das Nöthige – und dies so schön und vollkommen als du kannst! „Liebe das, was nothwendig ist“ – *amor fati* dies wäre meine Moral, thue ihm alles Gute an und hebe es über seine schreckliche Herkunft hinauf zu dir.⁴⁸

The phrase '*amor fati* dies wäre meine Moral' together with the imperative preceding it suggests that *amor fati* at least *could* be Nietzsche's morality, depending on how one interprets the subjunctive form of 'wäre'. It seems to be implied that *amor fati would* be his morality, but what inhibits the adoption of *amor fati* as a 'Moral' remains unclear. Nevertheless, this reference to morality can be taken as an indication in favour of Ure's interpretation, that is, if we can see 'meine Moral' as a kind of therapeutic device aimed at happiness. This would make this passage significantly different from FW 276 and the motto preceding it.

The sentence with which this passage ends, 'thue ihm alles Gute an und hebe es über seine schreckliche Herkunft hinauf zu dir' again suggests that the addressee is asked to *act* in a certain way that is described as *amor fati*, or in order to attain it. The personal pronoun 'ihm' could be interpreted as masculine, referring in that case to 'amor'; yet the addition of 'es' implies that 'ihm', too, must be neuter. The only words in the preceding sentences that can be referred to therefore are '*fatum*', 'das Nöthige' and 'das, was nothwendig ist'. The advice is thus to 'treat necessity well' and to 'raise necessity out of its horrible provenance towards you.'⁴⁹ What this entails exactly remains undetermined; we can only suspect that the notion of 'schreckliche Herkunft' suggests the presence of a problematic past. This may well be connected with the opening of FW 276, in which 'noch lebe ich' expresses a sense of surprise: I am still alive, despite what I have gone through. The 'schreckliche Herkunft' could then be the reason for this sentiment.

The only other point we can make about this passage is that there is an element of beauty involved, like in FW 276. The addressee of the imperative is told to make (although the verb 'to make' is absent) the necessary ('das Nöthige', and 'das, was nothwendig ist') as beautiful and perfect as possible ('so schön und vollkommen als du kannst'). It could be argued, thus, that 'taking necessity with you, raising it out of its horrible provenance' and 'making it as beautiful and perfect as possible' could be part of a (moral) therapy, although there is still no argument in this text for why and how it would improve our lives.

The note preceding NL 15[20] seems to connect the notion of love to that of an ideal, suggesting that love could be a kind of (possibly moral) ideal. Every love, like every ideal, should take as its object something as specific as possible:

NL 15[19] Ist es nicht ein Grad der Entweihung, wenn der Liebende denkt „nicht eigentlich nach dieser Geliebten verlange ich, sondern nach Liebe“ – ist nicht jede Verallgemeinerung des Ziels eine Entweihung? Ja schon dies ist grob und beleidigend „ich verlange nach dieser Geliebten“ – sondern die Sprache der Leidenschaft will nur Weniges, nur Einmaliges, nur ein Zeichen und Symbol. Schon alles Ganze als Ziel zu

⁴⁸ 9.643.

⁴⁹ Translation mine.

nennen ist Entweißung. Das Ideal muß zu groß als Ganzes sein – du sollst nur einzelne Strahlen abpflücken dürfen.⁵⁰

Connecting this passage to *NL* 15[20] indicates that the *fatum* referred to cannot be a totality, as that would be 'eine Entweißung', 'a sacrilege'. The formulation in *NL* 15[20], 'Zuerst das Nöthige', confirms the idea that *fatum* does not denote a totality, for if 'das Nöthige' comes first, it is implied that something else will follow – which is impossible if *fatum* includes everything. I will come back to this point below, and more extensively in chapter 5.

NL 15[19] and 15[20] taken together suggest that *amor fati* can be a kind of morality, one that seems to equate love (associated with desire and passion; 'ich verlange', 'Sprache der Leidenschaft') with the adoption of a certain ideal, one that is highly specific. *NL* 16[22] however, the other *amor fati* passage from 1881, sheds a different light on this picture. The dialogue of this passage underscores that the mission to love fate is not easy. It implies that one has to love 'Furien' before one can achieve the state of loving fate; and loving 'Furien' is 'maddening' because of the presence of snakes (perhaps again constituting a link with the 'schreckliche Herkunft' – a thought to which I shall return shortly).

3. *NL* 16[22] „Ja! Ich will nur das noch lieben, was nothwendig ist! Ja! Amor fati sei meine letzte Liebe!“ – Vielleicht treibst du es so weit: aber vorher wirst du erst noch der Liebhaber der Furien sein müssen: ich gestehe, mich würden die Schlangen irre machen. – „Was weißt du von den Furien! Furien – das ist nur ein böses Wort für die Grazien.“ – Er ist toll! –⁵¹

The dialogue in itself does not make clear which of the two voices is Nietzsche's, if there is one; it is clear however that the one claiming to 'want to love only that which is necessary from now on' is declared 'toll' ('mad') by the one who admits that the snakes of the Furies would drive him crazy (a reference to the 'Erinyen', figures sometimes referred to as 'infernal goddesses' in Greek mythology).⁵² Although this passage does not indicate any counter-argument against the idea that *amor fati* is a kind of morality, or therapy (the expression 'Vielleicht treibst du es so weit' suggests the presence of an ideal achievable with action), it cannot be taken as an argument straightforwardly supporting this thesis either. On the contrary: not only is the process of loving 'Furien' declared maddening, also the statement that 'Furien' is only a malicious word for 'Grazien' prompts the reaction 'he is mad'. In other words: *amor fati* seems to be associated with madness more than with therapy in this passage.

⁵⁰ 9.643.

⁵¹ 9.664.

⁵² According to Brusotti, M. (1997), the connection between 'Furien' and 'Grazien' was inspired by Nietzsche's reading of Emerson; 456, ft. 141: 'Emersons Fatalismus hatte Nietzsche bereits in seiner frühen Jugend beeinflußt. In dieser Aufzeichnung bearbeitet er ein Bild, das am Ende des Kapitels „Von der Bildung“ in dessen *Führung des Lebens* vorkommt: „Und wenn man die Zukunft der Rasse in dem organischen Streben der Natur sich zu erheben und zu verbessern und in der entsprechenden Richtung der menschlichen Rasse zum Bessern vorgezeichnet sehen soll, so werden wir zu bestätigen wagen, daß es nichts giebt was sie nicht überwinden und bekehren kann, bis zuletzt die Cultur Chaos und Gehenna absorbiren wird. Sie wird die Furien in Musen und die Höllen in Paradiese verwandeln.“ (R.W. Emerson: *Die Führung des Lebens. Gedanken und Studien*. Ins Deutsch übertragen von E.S. von Mühlberg, Leipzig 1862, S. 115)'.

1.2.1 *AMOR FATI AND THE ETERNAL RETURN*

Even though we can conclude from the three passages that it is unlikely that *amor fati* denotes a therapy, there are still commentators who argue for this position. Garry Brodsky is one of those. He does not refer to the *Nachlass* fragments, nor to *FW* 276, but to an aphorism which is frequently connected to it: *FW* 341. 'While [Nietzsche] is a superb critic, he says very little about how those of us who are impressed by his criticisms should live our lives. Further, the one general doctrine or idea Nietzsche advances which is evidently intended to serve this purpose, namely, the idea that we should love our respective fates (*amor fati*), seems to require us to respond positively (indeed, enthusiastically) to being told by a demon that we have recurred and will recur eternally, exactly as we are and have been.'⁵³ Although it is far from 'obvious' that *amor fati* is indeed intended to inform the readers 'who are impressed by his criticisms' how to live their lives, Brodsky has a point; at least *FW* 341 seems to address the readers more directly than *FW* 276.

FW 341 *Das grösste Schwergewicht.* – Wie, wenn dir eines Tages oder Nachts, ein Dämon in deine einsamste Einsamkeit nachschliche und dir sagte: „Dieses Leben, wie du es jetzt lebst und gelebt hast, wirst du noch einmal und noch unzählige Male leben müssen; und es wird nichts Neues daran sein [...]“.⁵⁴

The aphorism describes two possible reactions, formulated as questions to the reader. 'Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a God and never have I heard anything more divine"?'. The last sentence of this aphorism in particular has led many commentators like Brodsky to connect *amor fati* to this doctrine of the eternal recurrence:

Oder wie müsstest du dir selber und dem Leben gut werden, um nach Nichts mehr zu verlangen, als nach dieser letzten ewigen Bestätigung und Besiegelung?

Maudemarie Clark, for instance, claims that *amor fati* is 'the attitude of one who affirms the eternal recurrence'⁵⁵, a position also maintained by Julian Young⁵⁶, implying that *amor fati* must be equated with being 'well disposed to yourself and life'. Yirmiyahu Yovel takes the eternal recurrence as 'an existential fable'; 'this way, eternal recurrence serves to better explicate the content of *amor fati* and also to test its existence.'⁵⁷ Whereas some see the doctrine of the eternal recurrence as a kind of test (e.g. Leslie Paul Thiele: 'The eternal recurrence is best understood as the test of one's *amor fati* and thus of one's greatness'⁵⁸), others rather take the two doctrines as synonymous.⁵⁹

⁵³ Brodsky, G. (1998), 35.

⁵⁴ 3-570.

⁵⁵ Clark, M. (1990), 282.

⁵⁶ Young, J. (2010), 18, 501 ('willing'), 337, 351 ('desiring'), 531 ('embracing'), 501.

⁵⁷ Yovel, Y. (1989), 124.

⁵⁸ Thiele, L.P. (1991), 95. She adds on 96: 'Everybody who does not fully affirm life, including its terrifying mystery, is decadent.' Also Han-Pile, B. (2009) remarks on the first page of her article on Nietzsche and *amor fati*: 'Amor fati is often mentioned by commentators in connection with the eternal return and implicitly taken as an illustration of the sort of existential attitude characteristic of someone who would

Brian Domino summarizes the therapeutic importance of *amor fati* in combination with the doctrine of the eternal recurrence as follows: 'To love your fate involves examining those ideals you hold that suggest that your life could be better than it is. These are the ideals that prevent you from loving your actual life and that convince you to redirect your love to another, non-existent life. To love your fate means, in part, to shut the door on possibility, to reject the imaginings of the toxic ideals as merely so much phantasy that could not come to pass and so should not be mourned or desired.'⁶⁰ Even if this interpretation, which rejects the acceptance of any ideals, questions the reference to ideals we have encountered in *NL* 15[19], its main idea remains attractive: *amor fati*, read together with *FW* 341, may be intended to draw our attention away from non-existent possibilities and redirect it to words embracing what cannot be avoided: fate. Yet, this interpretation raises a new difficulty. If *amor fati* entails 'becoming so well disposed to yourself and life' that you are capable of willing every aspect of your life to return eternally, how to deal with its difficult aspects? To borrow from Han-Pile's way of putting it: 'fate is bound to entail at least some suffering and unhappiness for each of us. [...] In order to love fate, then, one would have to accept the paradoxical possibility of loving a repellent object'.⁶¹

How to love a repellent object, such as fate? How to deal with the Furies' 'maddening snakes' described in *NL* 16[22], or the 'schreckliche Herkunft' of *NL* 15[20]? Of course, the way in which this question is answered depends on the understanding of what fate is. Most commentators agree that fate must be connected to the recurring events of one's life, as described in *FW* 341 and summarized as 'dir selber und dein Leben'. If that is what fate entails, it means one has to love all one's characteristics, even the unattractive ones, and one's past, including its difficult moments. How to do this? It is far from easy, as Brodsky points out in a lively way.

[Even] if we are reasonably well disposed to ourselves we will still want to bargain with the demon and attempt to have some alterations made in the subsequent editions of ourselves. For who of us is so egomaniacal as not to want to be a bit smarter, more energetic, wealthier, better looking, more patient, and/or possessed of a better palate, a livelier libido and a greater appreciation of art, music, literature and the rest of the things which make life worth living? And that, alas, is not all. For all of us have done things of which we were and perhaps still are ashamed and will, therefore, want to have these things eliminated from subsequent versions of our lives and selves.⁶²

respond positively to the challenge of the daimon and affirm his or her life as worth living over and over again'. She refers in this context to Magnus, B. (1978), 145; Hatab, L. (2005), 49; Reginster, B. (2006), 229-30. See also Oger, E. (1997).

⁵⁹ E.g. Magnus, B. (1978), 216 ft 2: 'The expression "*amor fati*" appears to have been Nietzsche's own. It is, of course, a handy synonym for eternal recurrence and the attitude Nietzsche recommends.'

⁶⁰ Domino, B. (2012), 294.

⁶¹ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 3. Stern, T. (2013) makes the exact same point, 145-6: 'Put simply: fate isn't loveable. [...] Adorno is among the first to object in this way. *Amor fati* looked too much like the pathetic love of the captive for the bars of his cage'.

⁶² Brodsky, G. (1998), 44.

1.2.2 *AMOR FATI: LOVING THE UNLOVABLE*

Some commentators respond to this problem by turning to the accepting attitude of surrender we find Nietzsche describing in *Ecce Homo* (*EH*) as 'Russian Fatalism'. Brodsky, too, claims that Nietzsche's 'is the familiar fatalistic advice to understand and passively accept things as they are and must be. In *EH* I,6 he refers to this attitude as "*Russian Fatalism*".⁶³

EH weise 6 [...] Kranksein ist eine Art Ressentiment selbst. – Hiergegen hat der Kranke nur Ein grosses Heilmittel – ich nenne es den *russischen Fatalismus*, jenen Fatalismus ohne Revolte, mit dem sich ein russischer Soldat, dem der Feldzug zu hart wird, zuletzt in den Schnee legt. Nichts überhaupt mehr annehmen, an sich nehmen, in sich hineinnehmen, – überhaupt nicht mehr reagieren... Die grosse Vernunft dieses Fatalismus [...] ist die Herabsetzung des Stoffwechsels, dessen Verlangsamung, eine Art Wille zum Winterschlaf.⁶⁴

Although this attitude is presented as a therapeutic reaction (a 'grosses Heilmittel') to a disease identified as 'ressentiment', it is clear that slowing down, hibernating ('Winterschlaf') and refusing to act cannot be seen as similar to what we saw Nietzsche describing in *FW* 341 and 276 (even if we ignore the chronological gap between *FW* and *EH*⁶⁵). The two aphorisms in *FW* seem to advocate a more active attitude, one that regards the eternal recurrence as the 'letzte[n] ewige[n] Bestätigung und Besiegelung' of one's life, containing the hopeful wish to be 'irgendwann einmal nur noch ein Ja-sagender'. Russian fatalism, instead, is described as the last recourse in a state of distress: the Russian soldier can no longer withstand in an unbearable campaign. Even though we should not forget that *FW* 276 opens with the surprising 'Noch lebe ich', the pathos of the New Year's wish remains utterly different from that of the *EH* passage. Han-Pile suggests similarly that *if* Russian fatalism is to be connected to *amor fati*, it can only be seen as an antecedent state. The physical reaction of a metabolism slowing down arises only in emergencies, 'until one finds the courage and strength to measure oneself against one's pain'. Only after one has regained one's strength, one may achieve *amor fati*. Thus it 'can perhaps be seen as [*amor fati*]'s precursor', but not its equivalent.⁶⁶

Han-Pile's interpretation suggests that the love of *amor fati* is more than passive resignation. However, she also argues against any position that takes the love of *amor fati* as erotic in the Platonic sense, that is, as an active desire that reacts possessively to the attractiveness of something beautiful. Although *FW* 276 and *NL* 15[20] mention beauty in association with *amor fati*, we should note that a major part of this concerns *making* fate beautiful; the fact that *FW* 276 describes *amor fati* as something to be learned and to be achieved at some point in the

⁶³ Brodsky, G. (1998), 38. Also Stambaugh, J. (1985) differentiates between what she calls 'fatalism', referring to Nietzsche's rejection of Turkish fatalism in *WS* 61, and 'fate', which she equates to 'Russian fatalism' (134: 'Fate is his own positive concept; fatalism is his polemical target. He loved fate, not fatalism.'). Likewise, Sellars connects 'Russian Fatalism' to 'cosmic Stoicism', which he then equates with *amor fati*. For more on that, see chapter 2.2.3.

⁶⁴ 6.272.

⁶⁵ The distance in time finds its expression in the growing relevance of 'ressentiment' for instance; in the first four books of *FW* this diagnosis is absent.

⁶⁶ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 15.

future can only be understood if one takes the object of love to be unattractive initially (which is consistent with the mentioning of snakes in 16[22]'s *amor fati* as the love for 'Furien').

Han-Pile therefore argues for a middle position, in between *EH*'s passive resignation and erotic, active desire. According to her, *amor fati*'s love should be understood in the 'medio-passive' form, which is in between active and passive, leaving the lover in such a state 'that s/he participates in the action but without being in control of it'.⁶⁷ Anyone who ends up loving fate is actively engaged with him-/herself and the past, yet 'without any guarantee that the presence of such sensitivity will generate [...] love'.⁶⁸ Loving an unattractive object such as fate must be the effect of an agapic kind of love, one that is passively received like a 'secularised version of grace', and 'bestows value on its object, and this regardless of the value previously attributed to it'.⁶⁹ The sentence in *FW* 276 'Amor fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe!' (and the similar one in *NL* 16[22]) fits Han-Pile's line of argumentation well, for it suggests that Nietzsche humbly wishes for love, aware that it can neither be demanded nor learned. She concludes: 'love happens (or not) to us from the outside [...]. [A]mor fati is meant to change our *relation* to our (unchanged) past, and more generally to time, in such a way that neither revenge nor despair can hold sway on us anymore'.⁷⁰

Still, understanding the love of *amor fati* this way does not solve all problems. Her account suggests once again that we cannot *choose* to love fate; it may happen to us, or not, similarly to what we saw in the motto to *FW* IV and the presentation of *amor fati* as a wish in *FW* 276. The only thing up to us is the degree of receptivity that we can maintain. Yet, even though this suggestion does seem to fit some of the fragments discussed thus far, her argument that agapic *amor* cannot be learned does not. *FW* 276 points explicitly in the opposite direction: 'Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen'. Even if this sentence does not read literally 'Ich will lieben lernen', the suggestion is implied that love is a reaction to beauty, which is a typically Platonic perspective. What is more, further in Book IV we find an aphorism entitled '*Man muss lieben lernen*', a text that seems to have escaped Han-Pile's attention. It will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.⁷¹

1.2.3 *AMOR FATI: WHAT TO LOVE?*

There are several commentators, then, who hold on to an interpretation of *amor fati* as something that can be chosen, learned, and practically adopted; in Brian Domino's words: 'Nietzsche presents *amor fati* as a practical teaching'.⁷² Nevertheless, these commentators usually keep struggling with the impossibility of loving what is unlovable. One of them is Ure. We should keep in mind, first, that his standpoint is coloured by a slightly different take on the exact meaning of fate. Whereas Han-Pile and others mostly regard the love of fate as the love

⁶⁷ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 10.

⁶⁸ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 10.

⁶⁹ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 4. The reference to grace is made on 19: 'I would suggest that *amor fati* represents a human, heteronomous alternative to willing backwards and a secularised version of grace.'

⁷⁰ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 19.

⁷¹ *FW* 334 3.559-60. For an elaborate discussion of this aphorism and its relation to Han-Pile's argument, see section 5.3.1.

⁷² Domino, B. (2012), 292.

of oneself and one's past, Ure argues that Nietzsche's approach resembles Sellars' description of 'Cosmic Stoicism': 'Stoicism believes that it is possible to consent or say yes to all that comes to pass by adopting a cosmic perspective that dissolves the boundaries between oneself and the cosmos so that there is no longer any opposition between the two.'⁷³ Ure's interpretation of Nietzsche's *amor fati* therefore entails not only the affirmation of one's own fate, but also that of the entire cosmos in which it is embedded. Although we have seen in *NL* 15[19] that 'jede Verallgemeinerung des Ziels' should be avoided because it is 'eine Entweihung', there are other textual indications for accepting Ure's cosmic interpretation of fate.⁷⁴ I'll discuss two. The first explicitly takes on board not just one's own past, but suggests that the entire history of mankind be included:

FW 337 [...] Wir Gegenwärtigen fangen eben an, die Kette eines zukünftigen sehr mächtigen Gefühls zu bilden, Glied um Glied [...]. In der That: diess ist Eine Farbe dieses neuen Gefühls: wer die Geschichte der Menschen insgesamt als *eigene Geschichte* zu fühlen weiss [...]: diess Alles endlich in Einer Seele haben und in Ein Gefühl zusammendrängen: – diess müsste doch ein Glück ergeben, das bisher der Mensch noch nicht kannte⁷⁵

In this aphorism several examples of events and figures with their emotional states are brought up: an invalid dreaming of health, an old man thinking of the dreams of his youth, a lover robbed of his beloved, a martyr whose ideal is perishing – all summarized as 'the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, victories of humanity'. Not so much a generalized concept of the past therefore (a 'Verallgemeinerung'), rather an accumulation of as many particular events and feelings as possible.⁷⁶ The idea that the love of fate includes the totality of the past may be supported moreover by a more cosmic analysis in *FW* 109:

FW 109 *Hüten wir uns!* [...] Der Gesamt-Charakter der Welt ist [...] in alle Ewigkeit Chaos, nicht im Sinne der fehlenden Nothwendigkeit, sondern der fehlenden Ordnung, Gliederung, Form, Schönheit, Weisheit, und wie alle unsere ästhetischen Menschlichkeiten heissen. [...] Hüten wir uns, zu sagen, dass es Gesetze in der Natur gebe. Es giebt nur Nothwendigkeiten: da ist Keiner, der befiehlt, Keiner, der gehorcht, Keiner, der übertritt. Wenn ihr wisst, dass es keine Zwecke giebt, so wisst ihr auch, dass es keinen Zufall giebt: denn nur neben einer Welt von Zwecken hat das Wort „Zufall“ einen Sinn.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ure, M. (2008), 75. He refers to Sellars on 68.

⁷⁴ The texts I discuss are not mentioned in Ure's article. The text that he does refer to, from the *Nachlass*, is highly controversial: *NL* 11[7] 9.442-3: 'Die Irrthümer des ego entdecken! [...] Nein! Über „mich“ und „dich“ hinaus! Kosmisch empfinden!' For more on how to interpret this aphorism see section 2.4.

⁷⁵ 3.564-5.

⁷⁶ Brusotti, M. (1997), 477-8, agrees that this implies a notion of *amor fati* that goes beyond one's own past: 'Gerade im historischen Sinn wird die Bejahung auch des Leidens so weit wie sonst nie in der *Fröhlichen Wissenschaft* über die eng persönliche Sphäre hinaus ausgedehnt; die Bejahung reicht hier bis zu einer nahezu allgemeinen Identifikation mit dem historischen Leiden. Wer das Einzelne bejaht, bejaht die jeweiligen ereignishaften Zufälligkeiten (*amor fati*) ebenso wie die unterschiedlichen historischen Individualitäten (historischer Sinn).'

⁷⁷ 3.467-8.

It would be wrong to try to designate some general features of the cosmos as 'necessary' in order to love merely these; we should be aware, according to this aphorism, that all our human ways of understanding the cosmos are just that: anthropomorphisms. There are no laws governing the unfolding of the world, nor does the opposition between chance ('Zufall') and purpose ('Zwecke') apply. At the same time necessity as a category is not rejected: 'Es giebt nur Nothwendigkeiten'. It remains unclear in this text what it entails exactly (an uncertainty that is not solved in *FW*, not even in the totality of Nietzsche's oeuvre according to some); yet it is clear that if necessity is to be equated with *fatum*, *amor fati* cannot refer to merely one's own character and history; it should include the chaos and history of the 'Gesammt-Charakter der Welt'.

So, if Ure is right and Nietzsche's *amor fati* entails the love of the entire cosmos, which comes down to 'a transcendence of the individual will and its identification with the whole'⁷⁸ (a suggestion the immanence of which seems confirmed in the final sentence of *FW* 109: 'Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen!' ⁷⁹), the burden of embracing the unpleasant aspects of the cosmos has become even heavier. Can we really love all the instances of a cosmos filled with meaninglessness and pain, historical (i.e. the 'schreckliche Herkunft') as well as present (including the 'Furien')? This line of reasoning leads Ure to conclude that Nietzsche ultimately fails in his endeavour to develop a new kind of therapy. After a period in which Nietzsche had adopted many of the Stoic elements of therapy⁸⁰, he can no longer concur with the Stoic ideal of a calm, passionless state in *FW*: 'Contra Stoicism he seeks to revalue passions like distress, fear, delight and desire.'⁸¹ This shift in Nietzsche's judgment of Stoicism is taken up by Ure as an argument that the attempt cannot but end up in paradoxical impossibility; affirming passionately even those events that we now abhor, such as the holocaust or slavery, is simply undoable. How are we supposed to feel the passions of love and fear, or rejection, at the same time? As Domino puts it, making the same point as Ure: 'It is often noted that if everything repeats, including the inauspicious night when one first learned of eternal recurrence from the demon, the proper response is indifference.'⁸²

One possible solution to this problem, namely that we may affirm horrible events in the light of something else, something more loveable which owes its existence to them, is doomed to fail because of one of the late *amor fati* passages from 1888 that will be considered in more detail further below:

NL 16[32] [...] *amor fati*... — Hierzu gehört, die bisher verneinten Seiten des Daseins nicht nur als nothwendig zu begreifen, sondern als wünschenswerth: und nicht nur als

⁷⁸ Ure, M. (2008), 76. Of course, keeping in mind *FW* 109 just quoted, this 'whole' cannot be equated to the rationally structured sense of totality endorsed by the Stoics. Perhaps the word 'whole' is not well chosen therefore.

⁷⁹ 3.469.

⁸⁰ This is the position defended by Ure, M. (2008), and I agree with him. For more on this see chapter 3 and 4.

⁸¹ Ure, M. (2008), 72. For a more detailed analysis of Nietzsche's change of appreciation of Stoicism before *FW* see chapters 3 and 4.

⁸² Domino, B. (2012), 288.

wünschenswerth in Hinsicht auf die bisher bejahten Seiten (etwa als deren Complementary oder Vorbedingungen), sondern um ihrer selber willen⁸³

Another possibility, that we may want not only the events to return, but also our disapproval and opposition to them, is dismissed by Ure's argument that 'if we retrospectively want [the events] to happen, this can only occur by disconnecting ourselves from those affective judgements that made us not want them in the past. It is to want the return of the event *minus* the past judgment that made us experience it as painful and abhorrent.'⁸⁴ Which means that we would not fully want the return of *all* events, because we would carve out the event of our disapproval – and wanting our disapproval to return means to not want the return of the event itself. In other words, Ure's claim is that we simply cannot want and not want the return of an event at the same time. Consequently, the idea of *amor fati*, introduced as a therapy, fails.

1.2.4 *AMOR FATI AS THE AESTHETIC TURN TO THE SELF*

Where does all this leave us? We have now examined the textual possibilities of regarding the idea of *amor fati* as a therapeutic device by looking closely into the three *amor fati* passages of 1881/1882. We have seen that *amor fati* is introduced in the *Nachlass* passages as a possible morality ('dies wäre meine Moral'), perhaps an ideal, but in either case something maddening. *FW* 276 presents *amor fati* as something wished for in the future, and also something to be learned. The opening motto of Book IV mentions health, but not as the consequence of the adoption of a certain therapy. Thus only connecting *amor fati* to the doctrine of the eternal return in *FW* 341 opens the way for some arguments in favour of this idea. Yet, doing this runs into difficulties, the most apparent one being that it is almost impossible to love something so utterly unlovable as the reappearance of everything in a never-ending sequence. Many commentators have attempted to come up with a satisfactory solution to this question; some, like Ure, by merely pointing out that its paradox cannot be escaped, others with the aim of saving Nietzsche from its impossibility.

There are roughly three ways for taking the second path. One: we may go along with Han-Pile's suggestion and attempt to change our understanding of love until it can face the unlovable. We have seen, however, that this path is not without its problems: it would be difficult to continue to see *amor fati* as a therapy, and it fails to address the textual references to love as something to be learned. Two: we may attempt to develop a different notion of fate, such that loving it may still be difficult but not impossible. To love fate, then, entails something completely different from wishing the return of all events.⁸⁵ This line will be developed in chapter 5, but a first indication of it will be offered below. Three: we may explore the possibility of *amor fati* as non-therapeutic, at least not in a traditional sense. It is this line that I will adopt in chapter 5 as well.

⁸³ 13.492.

⁸⁴ Ure, M. (2008), 79.

⁸⁵ Domino, B. (2012) argues for this standpoint in the following way, 290: 'most scholars today agree that eternal recurrence is not a descriptive claim. [...] In contrast, *amor fati* does not offer prescriptive advice. If anything, *amor fati* would offer solace, not regret or fear of eternal repetition. [...] There is no need for *amor fati* as the proper response to eternal recurrence because eternal recurrence already contains one.'

We have seen that there are textual indications for seeing fate as something inclusive. *FW* 109 and 337 have been cited in that context. Yet, we have also come across textual evidence for *not* seeing the object of *amor fati* thus. Both *Nachlass* passages in which *amor fati* is introduced, together with the one preceding *NL* 15[20], 15[19], identify fate with 'what is necessary', allowing for a distinction between what is and is not necessary (*NL* 15[20]: 'Zuerst das Nöthige', '„Liebe das, was nothwendig ist“'; and *NL* 16[22]: '„Ja! Ich will nur das noch lieben, was nothwendig ist! [...]“'). Also *FW* 276 reveals a similar pattern. Not only does Nietzsche allow himself to look away ('*Wegsehen* sei meine einzige Verneinung!'), he moreover refers to necessity 'in things' ('Das Nothwendige an den Dingen'), as if there could be a non-necessary element to things as well.

The question is: how to distinguish between what is and is not necessary, so that we know what is to be loved and what not? Although chapter 5 will address this question in depth, let me just discuss some more approaches in the secondary literature here. Frank Chouraqui names *amor fati* a 'local form of affirmation', claiming that 'it is attached to some things in particular, not to any "fate" in general.'⁸⁶ Similarly, Domino argues that Nietzsche 'is not using the phrase "what is necessary" in the metaphysical sense.'⁸⁷ But if the necessity of *fatum* is not metaphysical, what is it? Tom Stern brings forward a straightforward answer in this context. His interpretation of necessity in *FW*'s *amor fati* is deeply tied with what we *need*, being the humans we are. His reasoning: '[we] find, in *The Gay Science*, plenty of discussion of what is necessary *for us*. [...] In fact, they are surprising and completely general claims about what all humans must do, if they are to survive at all.'⁸⁸

Even though there are some difficulties with Stern's account (to be discussed in chapter 5), it does take us back to the conclusion of *FW* 341: loving fate is becoming 'well disposed to yourself and life'. If we now leave aside the doctrine of the eternal return put forward in this aphorism and focus on other aphorisms in *FW*, we find plenty of fruitful suggestions that circumvent problems related to this doctrine. What is more, these aphorisms offer a more attractive idea of how to go about loving fate. As Stern argues, loving has everything to do with beauty and art. And so we return to the statement of *FW* 276: 'Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: — so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön machen' (a statement that resembles the sentence in *NL* 16[22] 'Zuerst das Nöthige – und dies so schön und vollkommen als du kannst!'). Loving fate seen from this perspective means aestheticising (seeing as beautiful and so making beautiful) these aspects of ourselves and our lives that we cannot change because they are needed in order to survive.

One of the authors defending this idea is Marco Brusotti. In his book many references to other *FW* texts can be found. I will mention three: *FW* 290, 299 and 17. *FW* 290 is an often quoted aphorism in the context of Nietzsche as a philosopher interested in self-cultivation:

⁸⁶ Chouraqui, F. (2015), 272. He discusses in this same context (273) 'what Daniel Dennett calls "local fatalism"', referring to Dennett, D.C. (1984), 104-6, and Solomon, R.C. (2002), 63-88.

⁸⁷ Domino, B. (2012), 293.

⁸⁸ Stern, T. (2013), 153. The idea that 'necessity' may be the outcome of our way of seeing things, as a result of our human way of interpreting, will be explored in chapter 5; in particular 5.3.2.3 and 5.3.2.4.

*FW 290 Eins ist Noth. – Seinem Charakter „Stil geben“ – eine grosse und seltene Kunst!*⁸⁹

This text offers some practical advice on how to 'stylise' one's character: it takes 'long practice and daily work', and elements that are ugly and 'that could not be removed' should be 'concealed' or 'reinterpreted into sublimity'.⁹⁰ *FW 299* offers even more suggestions in that direction: we may turn to physicians, who 'dilute something bitter and add wine and sugar to the mixing bowl', 'but even more to artists, who are really constantly out to invent new artistic *tours de force* of this kind.'⁹¹ *FW 17* might be the best example in this context, not least because it is the only other aphorism in *FW* that contains the word *fatum*:

*FW 17 Seine Armuth motiviren. – Wir können freilich durch kein Kunststück aus einer armen Tugend eine reiche, reichfliessende machen, aber wohl können wir ihre Armuth schön in die Nothwendigkeit umdeuten, sodass ihr Anblick uns nicht mehr wehe thut, und wir ihrethalben dem Fatum keine vorwurfsvollen Gesichter machen. So thut der weise Gärtner, der das arme Wässerchen seines Gartens einer Quellnympe in den Arm legt und also die Armuth motivirt: – und wer hätte nicht gleich ihm die Nymphen nöthig!*⁹²

The analogy is clear. Like the 'wise gardener', who places a 'poor little stream in the arms of a nymph', hiding its poverty in this way, we, too, should be creative with respect to our own character, artistically turning something unchangeable like a 'poor virtue' into a loved necessity. Peter Groff, one of the commentators who places Nietzsche in the context of self-cultivation, formulates this position as follows: 'This is the raw material we have to work with; our fate, as it were, the portion or allotment given to us by that blind, incompetent demiurge, nature. The challenge is to sculpt it into a work of art.'⁹³

This approach reopens the question: why would we do this? According to *FW 17* so that we stop making 'reproachful faces at fate', which suggests that we should make sure we are happy with it instead; in a similar way, *FW 290* pronounces that 'one thing is needful: that a human being should attain satisfaction with himself – be it through this or that poetry or art':

*FW 290 [...] Denn Eins ist Noth: dass der Mensch seine Zufriedenheit mit sich erreiche – sei es nun durch diese oder jene Dichtung und Kunst: nur dann erst ist der Mensch überhaupt erträglich anzusehen! Wer mit sich unzufrieden ist, ist fortwährend bereit, sich dafür zu rächen: wir Anderen werden seine Opfer sein, und sei es auch nur darin, dass wir immer seinen hässlichen Anblick zu ertragen haben. Denn der Anblick des Hässlichen macht schlecht und düster.*⁹⁴

⁸⁹ 3.530.

⁹⁰ 3.530: 'Hier ist das Hässliche, welches sich nicht abtragen liess, versteckt, dort ist es in's Erhabene umgedeutet.'

⁹¹ 3.538: 'Hier haben wir von den Aerzten Etwas zu lernen, wenn sie zum Beispiel das Bittere verdünnen oder Wein und Zucker in den Mischkrug thun; aber noch mehr von den Künstlern, welche eigentlich fortwährend darauf aus sind, solche Erfindungen und Kunststücke zu machen.'

⁹² 3.389.

⁹³ Groff, P.S. (2004), 156.

⁹⁴ 3.531.

These aphorisms taken together lead Brusotti to conclude: 'Prinzip einer Ästhetisierung des Lebens ist der *amor fati*. Wer sein Schicksal bejaht, ist mit dem eigenen Lebensweg zufrieden und zugleich mit dem eigenen Charakter. Den Lebensweg muß man ästhetisch so stilisieren, bis man mit seinem Schicksal zufrieden ist.'⁹⁵ And, a few pages further: 'Von den mit sich Unzufriedenen (vom Häßlichen) will Nietzsche hingegen wegsehen. Wie zu sich selbst, so will er sich zu anderen ästhetisch verhalten. Mit sich zufrieden sein, sich an anderen nicht rächen, von einigen aber wegsehen – all das gehört zu *amor fati*.'⁹⁶ Interestingly, this interpretation of *amor fati* sheds new light on the idea of *amor fati* as a therapeutic device. Brusotti connects it explicitly to the importance of 'attaining satisfaction' with ourselves; likewise, Peter Groff regards *amor fati* as one of these 'spiritual exercises', a term borrowed from Pierre Hadot⁹⁷, that are 'all ultimately directed toward the therapeutic cultivation of a self untouched by sorrow and capable of joyfully affirming everything that occurs.'⁹⁸ What is more, 'human beings who have redeemed their existence through aesthetic self-cultivation are not only more capable of joyful affirmation, but they also serve as exemplary persons who indirectly help to banish the sorrow [...] of others.'⁹⁹

Yet, this analysis of *amor fati*, convincing as it is, is not unproblematic. First of all, it seems to avoid the difficulty of the eternal return – but to what extent can it really escape it? Does not the question 'wie müsstest du dir selber und dem Leben gut werden, um nach Nichts mehr zu verlangen, als nach dieser letzten ewigen Bestätigung und Besiegelung?' in *FW* 341 automatically tie the therapeutic ideal to the eternal return? Also, can this interpretation really do justice to the difficulties raised in the two *Nachlass* fragments: the 'Furien' and the 'schreckliche Herkunft'? Thirdly, connecting love to the aesthetic techniques developed in *FW* 290 and 299 opens up a new problem. For it seems that Nietzsche, too, knows that love is blind. In *FW* 59 we read: 'Es genügt, zu lieben, zu hassen, zu begehren, überhaupt zu empfinden, – sofort kommt der Geist und die Kraft des Traumes über uns, und wir steigen offenen Auges [...] hinauf auf die Dächer und Thürme der Phantasterei [...]! Wir Künstler! Wir Verhehler der Natürlichkeit!'¹⁰⁰ In other words: if loving something means artistically changing it, if it implies that our imagination 'conceals naturalness', to what extent can we still say that a lover of fate really loves fate, and not some adapted, more appealing version of it?¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Brusotti, M. (1997), 467.

⁹⁶ Brusotti, M. (1997), 470; strictly speaking, *FW* 290 does not advise 'wegsehen vom Hässlichen', but that everyone should attain 'Zufriedenheit mit sich', so that there is no 'Hässliche[n]'.
⁹⁷ Hadot, P. (1995), *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Part II 'Spiritual Exercises', 79-144. 82-83: 'The Stoics, for instance, declared explicitly that philosophy, for them, was an "exercise". In their view, philosophy did not consist in teaching an abstract theory – much less in the exegesis of texts – but rather in the art of living. It is a concrete attitude and determinate life-style, which engages the whole of existence. The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level, but that of the self and of being.'

⁹⁸ Groff, P.S. (2004), 159.
⁹⁹ Groff, P.S. (2004), 157.
¹⁰⁰ 3.423.
¹⁰¹ As Thiele, L.P. (1991), 93, formulates it: 'In the realm of love, the line between illusion and reality is not thin: it simply does not exist.'

1.3 *AMOR FATI* AS A 'GOTT-ERGEHENHEIT'

Before reaching some final conclusions regarding the *amor fati* passages within this time frame, let me first discuss one more passage that can be said to belong to it as well. It is found in a letter to Franz Overbeck, written the fifth of June 1882:

4. Mein lieber Freund, [...] Die Wahrheit ist: in der Art, wie ich hier handeln will und werde, bin ich einmal ganz und gar der Mensch meiner Gedanken, ja meines innersten Denkens: diese *Übereinstimmung* thut mir so wohl, wie mir das Bild meiner Genueser Existenz wohlthut, in der ich auch nicht hinter meinen Gedanken zurückgeblieben bin. Es sind eine Menge meiner Lebensgeheimnisse in diese *neue* Zukunft eingewickelt, und es bleiben mir hier Aufgaben zu lösen, die man nur durch die That lösen kann. – Übrigens bin ich von einer fatalistischen „Gottergebenheit“ – ich nenne es *amor fati* – dass ich einem Löwen in den Rachen laufen würde, geschweige denn – ¹⁰²

This passage reintroduces the difficult question concerning the amount of activity and passivity involved in *amor fati*, not in the least because of the way in which the letter expresses a kind of happiness about the sense of '*Übereinstimmung*' between thought and action. Not surprisingly, Han-Pile refers to this letter to strengthen her argument that *amor fati*'s love is medio-passive. Mentioning the phrase 'fatalistischen Gott-Ergebenheit' in this letter, she argues 'that the proper attitude to *amor fati* is one of *surrender*, not of erotic pursuit, affirmation or willfulness.'¹⁰³ More will be said below on the possibility of a degree of passivity in what Han-Pile defines as the 'active' erotic type of love related to aesthetics and art in section 1.6 and chapter 5; in this section I will focus on the religious dimension of *amor fati*. If *amor fati* is indeed, as Han-Pile suggests, a kind of 'secularised version of grace', to what extent should we see *amor fati* as a religious notion? How much influence should we allow this letter and its mysterious reference to God to have on our understanding of *amor fati*?

Paul van Tongeren takes the letter to be of great importance. 'That Nietzsche does relate the experience of this ideal [*amor fati*] to religion seems obvious. As early as 1882, in a letter to his friend Overbeck, he writes: "– For that matter, I am of a fatalistic 'godgivenness' – I call it *amor fati* –" [...]. The affirmation of fate, or even the identification with it, is experienced as being given by God, as being released by God *and* like him, as being enabled to comply with fate, as a divine resignation.'¹⁰⁴ Van Tongeren goes on exploring the exact role God has to play in this process. After examining *Jenseits von Gut und Böse (JGB)* 56, he concludes: "The world to be affirmed is a vicious circle, an endless repetition of the same without any progress, without any

¹⁰² KGB III/1.199–200.

¹⁰³ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 9. She moreover detects a biblical background in the reference to the lion, 30, ft. 36: 'Rushing into a lion's jaws is clearly a reference to the Book of Daniel, 6, 16–23.' Although she might be right, it does not follow that *amor fati* is a straightforwardly biblical or religious notion.

¹⁰⁴ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 299. Young, too, sees this letter as an indication that *amor fati* should be seen as something religious. Young, J. (2010), 351: 'When, at the beginning of 1882, he hit upon *amor fati* [...] he described it as an expression of 'submission to God'. In short, once he had cast off the shackles of doctrinaire positivism, his most fundamental problem became the question of how to recover the religious attitude to life – without backsliding into supernatural myths.'

telos, and therefore without any meaning. This meaningless fatality is first presented as the spectacle of a god, but then identified with the god. The name of this god is Dionysus.¹⁰⁵

Van Tongeren thus holds that God, later identified as Dionysos, is not only that which allows Nietzsche to affirm fate, as the 'giver' of the divine 'grace' of 'resignation'; it is moreover identified as fate itself, that which is affirmed in the act of loving fate. Since Van Tongeren also maintains that *amor fati* entails an identification with fate, it follows that the lover of fate becomes himself God, or Dionysos. This interpretation not only closely resembles what we encountered earlier as 'Cosmic Stoicism', that is, the 'cosmic perspective that dissolves the boundaries between oneself and the cosmos'; now that the divine Dionysos has entered the stage it can also be seen as a 'mystic' attitude, one that describes the experience of a 'union with God', the '*unio mystica*'.¹⁰⁶

But to what extent does this position suit Nietzsche's own thoughts of the 'cosmos' or 'God' in this time frame? We have seen how he warns against any anthropomorphism in our understanding of the universe in *FW* 109, claiming that the 'Gesamt-Charakter der Welt ist [...] in alle Ewigkeit Chaos', not because of a lack of necessity, but because there is no 'Ordnung, Gliederung, Form, Schönheit, Weisheit' and all other 'ästhetischen Menschlichkeiten'. Importantly, the final sentences of this aphorism explicitly associate these with the shadows of God still present in our human perspective: 'Wann werden uns alle diese Schatten Gottes nicht mehr verdunkeln? Wann werden wir die Natur ganz entgöttlicht haben!' If Nietzsche defends a form of immanence in this aphorism ('Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen!'¹⁰⁷), it is clear that it should not be associated with anything divine – at least not in the traditional (Christian) sense of the word.

Whereas *FW* 109 seems mainly to deny the universe all kinds of anthropomorphic characteristics, the idea of an identification with the cosmos will become even more difficult after the introduction of the term 'nihilism' and 'will to power', painting a picture of an even less lovable world. This leads Yovel to conclude that Nietzsche's *amor fati* is incomparable with the Spinozistic conception of *amor dei intellectualis*: 'There can be no form of *unio mystica* here, as in Spinoza, because the defiant posture entails a distance between the affirming person and the universe he or she affirms and loves. [...] Thus Dionysus, though he bears a mystical name, actually stands for a non-mystical attitude.'¹⁰⁸ More will be said on this subject in section 1.5. For now, there are other arguments against *amor fati* as a religious experience.

¹⁰⁵ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 299–300. *JGB* 56 5:75: 'das Ideal des übermüthigsten lebendigsten und weltbejahendsten Menschen, der sich nicht nur mit dem, was war und ist, abgefunden und vertragen gelernt hat, sondern es, so wie es war und ist, wieder haben will, in alle Ewigkeit hinaus, unersättlich da capo rufend, nicht nur zu sich, sondern zum ganzen Stücke und Schauspiele, und nicht nur zu einem Schauspiele, sondern im Grunde zu Dem, der gerade dies Schauspiel nöthig hat – und nöthig macht: weil er immer wieder sich nöthig hat – und nöthig macht – – Wie? Und dies wäre nicht – circulus vitiosus deus?'

¹⁰⁶ Although this kind of 'mysticism' is incomparable with the traditional Neo-Platonic or Medieval Christian interpretation of it, to be found for instance in Meister Eckhart or John of the Cross, whereby the experience of unification implies an understanding of God as radically transcendent.

¹⁰⁷ 3.469.

¹⁰⁸ Yovel, Y. (1989), 127–8.

Even if we set aside for the moment the mystic aspect and merely concentrate on the 'god-giveness' of *amor fati*, there are enough textual arguments to question this implication. First of all, we should not forget that the term 'Gott-Ergebenheit' is in between quotation marks. It would not be far-fetched to take the reference to God here non-literally, perhaps even ironically. In support of this idea it should be noted that 'Gott-Ergebenheit' does not reappear anywhere in Nietzsche's published works; it only occurs once in the *Nachlass*, in a passage written in 1883, in brackets and with quotation marks.¹⁰⁹ All other instances (I counted six) appear in Nietzsche's letters, the majority of these again with quotation marks.¹¹⁰

Moreover, if we take a closer look at what 'Gott-Ergebenheit' is supposed to mean, it appears that its adoption is discouraged in *FW* 277, the aphorism immediately following the one in which *amor fati* is introduced. In addition to the letter quoted above, two more letters were written in June 1882 containing the word 'Gott-Ergebenheit'. They reveal in a clearer way what it means. The first was written the 18th of June 1882 to Lou Salomé, the second the 19th of June to Heinrich Köselitz.

Liebe Freundin, Also: ich habe eine kleine anscheinend sehr thörichte Reise nach Berlin gemacht, bei der mir *Alles* mißrieth [...]. Heute aber bin ich schon ganz wieder in meine fatalistische „Gott-Ergebenheit“ zurückverfallen und glaube von Neuem, daß mir Alles zum Besten reichen muß – – sogar diese Berliner Reise¹¹¹

Mein lieber alter Freund, ein seltsames Jahr! [...] Denn es muß mir *Alles* zum Besten reichen: ich lebe ganz in einer fatalistischen „Gott-Ergebenheit“. – Genauer läßt sich nicht schreiben.¹¹²

These lines suggest that the 'fatalistische „Gott-Ergebenheit“' is the faith that everything will turn out well, even the smallest things that went wrong (like the failed travel to Berlin); they are part of a greater 'divine' plan designed for Nietzsche personally, in which even the failures turn out 'for the best'. This faith is described in more detail in *FW* 277 as follows:

FW 277 [...] Das Leben jedes Tages und jeder Stunde scheint Nichts mehr zu wollen, als immer nur diesen Satz neu beweisen; sei es was es sei, böses wie gutes Wetter, der Verlust eines Freundes, eine Krankheit, eine Verleumdung, das Ausbleiben eines Briefes, die Verstauchung eines Fusses, ein Blick in einen Verkaufsladen, ein Gegenargument, das Aufschlagen eines Buches, ein Traum, ein Betrug: es erweist sich sofort oder sehr bald nachher als ein Ding, das „nicht fehlen durfte“, – es ist voll tiefen Sinnes und Nutzens gerade *für uns*!¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ *NL* 14[2] 10.476: 'eine Art Glück ("Gottergebenheit")'.

¹¹⁰ In total I have found seven instances, two of which have been mentioned above. The other five all appear in letters, three of which with quotation marks. The first letter is written January 25 1882 to Heinrich Köselitz (*KGB* III/1.158-60); the second May 8 1882 to Paul Rée (*KGB* III/1.191); the third June 18 1882 to Lou Salomé (*KGB* III/1.206-7); the fourth June 19 1882 to Heinrich Köselitz (*KGB* III/1.207-8); the fifth July 17 1887 to Franz Overbeck (*KGB* III/5.109-11).

¹¹¹ *KGB* III/1.206-7.

¹¹² *KGB* III/1.207-8.

¹¹³ 3.522.

Young concludes that Nietzsche advises us to 'to discover, as it were, a 'personal providence' running through [our lives].' 'We need to be able to show how 'everything that befalls us continually turns out for the best' (*GS* 277), [...] we need to have turned, or be confident we will turn, a traumatic event into a 'learning' or, in some other way, 'growth' experience. This then – desiring the eternal return, i.e., *amor fati* – is Nietzsche's ideal of happiness."¹⁴ Even apart from the questionable equation between *amor fati*, the eternal return, and the connection with happiness, Young seems to have misread *FW* 277. For, as far as his reading presupposes that we should have faith that everything will, indeed, 'turn out for the best', Nietzsche rather warns against this kind of faith:

FW 277 *Persönliche Providenz*. – Es giebt einen gewissen hohen Punct des Lebens: haben wir den erreicht, so sind wir mit all unserer Freiheit, und so sehr wir dem schönen Chaos des Daseins alle fürsorgende Vernunft und Güte abgestritten haben, noch einmal in der grössten Gefahr der geistigen Unfreiheit und haben unsere schwerste Probe abzulegen. Jetzt nämlich stellt sich erst der Gedanke an eine persönliche Providenz mit der eindringlichsten Gewalt vor uns hin und hat den besten Fürsprecher, den Augenschein, für sich, jetzt wo wir mit Händen greifen, dass uns alle, alle Dinge, die uns treffen, fortwährend *zum Besten* gereichen.

After having experienced 'a certain high point in life', so Nietzsche reasons, we are in great danger of losing the freedom we have achieved. For now that we have acknowledged that there is no 'fürsorgende Vernunft und Güte' in the world, that is, in the 'schönen Chaos des Daseins', we are still tempted to adopt another kind of irrational faith: that of a 'persönliche Providenz': it may seem, as we have seen above, that everything that happens contains a secret significance especially *for us*. On the one hand, we should 'leave the gods alone' and 'be content with the assumption that our own practical and theoretical skill in interpreting and arranging events has now reached its apex', according to the following sentences of this aphorism.¹⁵ On the other, we should not think too highly of 'the dexterity of our wisdom.' For, analogous to music, sometimes our actions create a harmony that 'sounds too good to dare to give credit to ourselves'; 'hier und da spielt Einer *mit* uns' – not a God, or Dionysos, but 'der liebe Zufall'.

There are only two possible explanations when things seem to turn out for the best therefore: it is either our highly developed skill of interpretation, or else 'der liebe Zufall'. 'Personal providence' as a form of 'Gott-Ergebenheit', taken literally, must be ruled out. Which leaves us with one question: why would Nietzsche associate *amor fati* with 'Gott-Ergebenheit' in one of his letters while clearly separating the two in the opening of Book IV? Although it is doubtful that we will ever reach a satisfying explanation, I think we should in this context give precedence to Nietzsche's published texts over his letters. Whereas the aphorisms of *FW* were intended to be read by an anonymous and large public, the letters were written for a very specific audience (in this case Franz Overbeck), one that would perhaps appreciate better the mild form of self-irony present in the confession. Or, another possibility, it could be that Nietzsche allowed himself to be somewhat less articulate in his letters than in his aphorisms.

¹⁴ Young, J. (2010), 337.

¹⁵ Probably these sentences inspired Thiele, L.P. (1991), to conclude that fate 'becomes a sort of providence for those capable of breathing soul into accident', 94. Although he may be right, we should not forget that Nietzsche completely dismisses the notion of providence in this aphorism.

In any case, if we are to choose between the texts in *FW*, composed with care and precision, and the letters, the outcome is evident.

Now that we have dismissed the religious background of *amor fati* as it appears in this letter, we can reach a conclusion in relation to the four *amor fati* passages considered so far. It can be a kind of morality, a wish, an ideal, but a difficult one, as it seems to entail a reconciliation with something that resists being loved – whether it be the eternal return or another notion of fate. In the letter to Franz Overbeck an element of courage can be detected, as it is thanks to the ‘fatalistischen Gott-Ergebenheit’ (‘ich nenne es *amor fati*’) that Nietzsche is ready to ‘rush into a lion’s jaws, let alone...’. So even if we have ruled out the idea that *amor fati* is a divine kind of ‘grace’, one that entails the faith that ‘all will be well’, we can imagine that *amor fati* asks for an almost inhuman kind of courage: it involves dealing with something with a ‘schreckliche Herkunft’ and loving ‘Furien’ with maddening snakes. Whether this understanding of *amor fati* allows for a therapeutic interpretation cannot be decided at this point, though it is clear that it is implausible.

The remaining six *amor fati* occurrences, all within their contexts, will be explored in the remainder of this chapter. It will be made apparent that their context gradually changes; a situation that influences the meaning of *amor fati* along with it.

1.4 *AMOR FATI AND ZARATHUSTRA*

The next occurrence can be found in the *Nachlass* of 1884, written in the spring. This is the time in which Nietzsche had finished the first three books of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Z*) and considers what should come next.¹¹⁶ The fragment denotes one of several attempts to find a suitable title for a possible new work.

5. *NL 25[500] Weisheit und Liebe zur Weisheit Prolegomena zu einer Philosophie der Zukunft. Von Friedrich Nietzsche. Amor Fati.*¹¹⁷

We have seen previously how *amor fati* is oriented to the future (especially in *FW* 276 and *NL* 16[22]). To this we can add a new element: the association with wisdom, ‘Weisheit’. The only earlier encounter we have had with this notion is in *FW* 17, where the ‘wise gardener’ knew how to aesthetically cover up a ‘poor stream’. As I will argue in more detail in chapter 5, *amor fati* cannot be seen separately from Nietzsche’s engagement with wisdom, truth, and science (indicated in one of the first sentences of *FW* 276: ‘Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum’). I will argue that the appearance of *amor fati* in a work called ‘*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*’ is far from coincidental.

¹¹⁶ According to Young, Nietzsche announced in the fall of that year that he worked on *Z*’s Book IV, although this book was never meant for publication. Young, J. (2010), 383: ‘By 1886 [...] his letters make clear that he genuinely did not want to publish Part IV: on account of its extremely blasphemous nature, he feared ‘the police’, and the possible loss of his pension.’

¹¹⁷ 11.145.

Although this small fragment does not offer any further clues concerning the exact relation between love of wisdom and *amor fati*, the following passage, to be found in the same notebook, reveals in more detail how to interpret philosophy as love of wisdom.

NL 25[451] *Philosophie als Liebe zur Weisheit*. Hinauf zu dem Weisen als dem Beglücktesten, Mächtigsten, der *alles Werden* rechtfertigt und wieder will. – nicht Liebe zu den Menschen oder zu Göttern, oder zur Wahrheit, sondern *Liebe zu einem Zustand, einem geistigen und sinnlichen Vollendungs-Gefühl*: ein Bejahen und Gutheißen aus einem überströmenden Gefühle von gestaltender Macht. Die große Auszeichnung. **wirkliche Liebe!**¹¹⁸

The formulation 'Hinauf zu dem Weisen' points to the importance of the future again, possibly even denoting the presence of an ideal, the ideal of the sage; this idea is confirmed in recurrent fragments hinting at love of wisdom as a future philosophy.¹¹⁹ The wise one is described as the one most happy and powerful, capable of justifying and willing all becoming again; clearly a reference to the eternal return. Love of wisdom, according to this fragment, should not be confused with love of humanity, or Gods, or of truth; it is the love of a certain condition – implying that wisdom is a state of being rather than the possession of truth or knowledge. It is, to be exact, a feeling; a feeling of sensate and spiritual completion, it is the abundant feeling of the exercise of power, resulting, importantly, in 'Bejahen' and 'Gutheißen'. Although it is not clear exactly where and how *amor fati* should be placed within this context; that it belongs to it seems undeniable.

Also in Z itself, Book II, we find a critique of the will to truth.

Von der Selbst-Ueberwindung. „Wille zur Wahrheit“ heisst ihr's, ihr Weisesten, was euch treibt und brünstig macht? Wille zur Denkbareit alles Seienden: also heisse *ich* euren Willen! Alles Seiende wollt ihr erst denkbar *machen*: denn ihr zweifelt mit gutem Misstrauen, ob es schon denkbar ist. Aber es soll sich euch fügen und biegen! So will's euer Wille. Glatt soll es werden und dem Geiste unterthan, als sein Spiegel und Widerbild. Das ist euer ganzer Wille, ihr Weisesten, als ein Wille zur Macht [...]. Schaffen wollt ihr noch die Welt, vor der ihr knien könnt: so ist es eure letzte Hoffnung und Trunkenheit.¹²⁰

The reference to 'ihr Weisesten' seems to be intended as different from 'wisdom' in the previous passage; here, the word 'wisest' has an almost ironic tone, referring to those that have mistakenly been taken to be thus – or only up until now. The will to truth is revealed to be the opposite of passivity, usually presenting itself as a modest will inclined to patiently receive truth; we now see how it rather wants to *make* all beings *thinkable* as a 'Wille zur Denkbareit alles Seienden'. It is a *creating* will therefore, as a will to power imposing its will upon its object, forcing it to adjust itself ('sich fügen'), bend ('biegen'), and be made submissive ('unterthan'). But only so that it can kneel before it afterwards (the apparent link with

¹¹⁸ 11.133.

¹¹⁹ Such as the *amor fati* passage, but also, among others, NL 25[490] 11.142: '*Weisheit und Liebe zur Weisheit*. Fingerzeige zu einer Philosophie der Zukunft. Von Friedrich Nietzsche'.

¹²⁰ Z II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.146.

asceticism, which Nietzsche will work out in more detail in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* III, is explored in chapter 3.3 and 5.4; in 2.5 the association with Stoic 'tyranny' is examined).

We should thus not conclude too hastily that the will to truth is itself an inappropriate drive. It is rather argued here that the 'Wille zur Denkbarkeit' discloses something else, namely the will to power. And, as Nietzsche writes a bit further: 'Wo ich Lebendiges fand, da fand ich Willen zur Macht; und noch im Willen des Dienenden fand ich den Willen, Herr zu sein.'¹²¹ The passage *Auf den glückseligen Inseln* might be helpful in reconstructing the exact relation between will to power, life, creation, wisdom and the eternal return in the way Nietzsche envisions it for the future – also, albeit indirectly, for a better understanding of *amor fati*. Its opening suggests that we should replace God with the *Übermensch*:

Eins sagte man Gott, wenn man auf ferne Meere blickte; nun aber lernte ich euch sagen: Übermensch. [...] Könntet ihr einen Gott *schaffen*? – So schweigt mir doch von allen Göttern! Wohl aber könntet ihr den Übermensch schaffen.¹²²

Auch im Erkennen fühle ich nur meines Willens Zeuge- und Werde-Lust; und wenn Unschuld in meiner Erkenntniss ist, so geschieht diess, weil Wille zur Zeugung in ihr ist. Hinweg von Gott und Göttern lockte mich dieser Wille; was wäre denn zu schaffen, wenn Götter – da wären!¹²³

Although it is often stated that *Z* is a religious work (Nietzsche even refers to it as a 'fifth Gospel'¹²⁴), it is clear from this fragment that the element of religion cannot be identified as the desire to worship God¹²⁵; instead, the focus is on creation and procreation. God cannot be created, it is claimed, but the *Übermensch* can be – so let's focus on him and use our powers for his future appearance (similar to 'Hinauf zu dem Weisen'). The same seems to hold in the context of 'knowing' and 'wisdom'; only if we understand these in terms of creation can they be 'innocent' and productive.

When we think about *amor fati* in this context we should note therefore, first of all, that it cannot be a religious concept in the traditional sense of the word (not as something 'god-given' that is). Secondly, we have seen that *Z* puts a lot of emphasis on creation; if *amor fati* has a role to play in this context, it will have to be connected to it somehow. Importantly, when creation is discussed, much attention is dedicated to the drives producing it. The passage quoted above mentions 'meines Willens Zeuge- und Werde-Lust', 'Wille zur Zeugung'; the *Nachlass* passage quoted previously describes the love of wisdom as 'einem überströmenden Gefühle von gestaltender Macht'. This is of importance in particular because several texts in *Z* denote the productive will as 'fated'. In the final text within *Von alten und neuen Tafeln*, for instance, we find:

¹²¹ *Z* II Selbst-Ueberwindung 4.147-8.

¹²² *Z* II Inseln 4.109.

¹²³ *Z* II Inseln 4.111.

¹²⁴ Young, J. (2010), 366; *KGB* III/1.375.

¹²⁵ On the contrary: everything that is traditionally associated with divinity (one-ness, motionless-ness, fullness, immortality) is deemed 'bad' and 'misanthropic'; see *Z* II Inseln 4.110: 'Böse heisse ich's und menschenfeindlich: all diess Lehren vom Eine, und Vollen und Unbewegten und Satten und Unvergänglichem! Alles Unvergängliche – das ist nur ein Gleichniss!'

30 Oh du mein Wille! Du Wende aller Noth du *meine* Nothwendigkeit! [...] Du Schickung meiner Seele, die ich Schicksal heisse! Du-In-mir! Über-mir!¹²⁶

The text preceding this one explicitly connects 'Schicksal' with creation, while introducing the connection between being a 'Schicksal' and being 'hard'.

29 [...] wollt ihr nicht Schicksale sein und Unerbittliche: wie könntet ihr mit mir – siegen? Und wenn eure Härte nicht blitzen und scheiden und zerschneiden will: wie könntet ihr einst mit mir – schaffen? Die Schaffenden nämlich sind hart.¹²⁷

Amor fati seen from this perspective would mean the love of one's own fated will, loving and allowing for the fact that one's will is hard, creative, 'victorious'. It is similar in this respect to the love of wisdom discussed above; both designate the love of a certain condition, an inner state and a powerful, creative feeling. Why would it be 'fated'? Probably first to emphasise the absence of choice in processes like this. All creation is the inevitable consequence of a will that does not 'choose' but proceeds continuously¹²⁸; as it is described in *Das Grablied*:

Ja, ein Unverwundbares, Unbegrabbares ist an mir, ein Felsensprengendes: das heisst *mein Wille*. Schweigsam schreitet es und unverändert durch die Jahre. Seinen Gang will er gehn auf meinen Füßen, mein alter Wille; herzenshart ist ihm der Sinn und unverwundbar.¹²⁹

Also, secondly, because there is a sense of inevitable pain involved. Creation involves inescapable – fated – suffering (even though it also functions as its redemption):

Schaffen – das ist die grosse Erlösung vom Leiden, und des Lebens Leichtwerden. Aber dass der Schaffende sei, dazu selber thut Leid noth und viel Verwandlung. Ja, viel bitteres Sterben muss in eurem Leben sein, ihr Schaffenden! [...] Aber so will's mein schaffender Wille, mein Schicksal. Oder, dass ich's euch redlicher sage: solches Schicksal gerade – will mein Wille.¹³⁰

The confrontation of *amor fati* with these fragments clearly suggests that the love of fate may signify the love of oneself, particularly one's will or soul; as we read in *Von der grossen Sehnsucht*: 'Oh meine Seele, [...] ich gab dir selber den Namen „Wende der Noth“ und „Schicksal“. [...] Oh meine Seele, es giebt nun nirgends eine Seele, die liebender wäre und umfangender und umfänglicher!¹³¹ Interestingly, this last quotation opens up a new

¹²⁶ Z III Tafeln 4.268-9.

¹²⁷ Z III Tafeln 4.268.

¹²⁸ Significantly, in the previous passage the hardness of one's 'Schicksal' is not only presented as a law ('Diese neue Tafel, oh meine Brüder, stelle ich über euch: *werdet hart!*'); also, the process of 'becoming hard' is described as the physical (and hence unalterable) process from 'Küchen-Kohle' ('kitchen-carbon') into diamond. 'Warum so hart! – sprach zum Diamanten einst die Küchen-Kohle; sind wir denn nicht Nah-Verwandte?' 4.268.

¹²⁹ Z II Grablied 4.145.

¹³⁰ Z II Inseln 4.110-1.

¹³¹ Z III Sehnsucht 4.279. Stambaugh, J. (1985) too, signifies the effect of this passage on the meaning of *amor fati*, 138-9: 'This passage dramatically expresses why we are no longer dealing with two separate questions: fate is a name for the soul. [...] This means that the soul is not to be understood in a personal

perspective: if the soul, identified as Schicksal, is not only the object to be loved but is itself a loving subject too, this changes the relation between the terms 'love' and 'fate'. It might point to an alternative interpretation, whereby '*fati*' can be seen as a 'subjective genitive' instead of the usual 'objective genitive'.

There are several other candidates for the position of the object of *amor fati*. One that has received a lot of attention in secondary literature is that of time, more in particular the past. We read in *Von der Erlösung* the following famous passage:

Wille – so heisst der Befreier und Freudebringer: also lehrte ich euch, meine Freunde! Und nun lernt diess hinzu: der Wille selber ist noch ein Gefangener. Wollen befreit: aber wie heisst Das, was auch den Befreier noch in Ketten schlägt? „Es war“: also heisst des Willens Zähneknirschen und einsamste Trübsal. Ohnmächtig gegen Das, was gethan ist – ist er allem Vergangenen ein böser Zuschauer. Nicht zurück kann der Wille wollen; dass er die Zeit nicht brechen kann und der Zeit Begierde, – das ist des Willens einsamste Trübsal.¹³²

Yet for this problem of unfreedom of the will there seems to be a solution; the will must learn to conjoin willing and necessity by reinterpreting the 'es war' as 'so will ich es'.¹³³

Alles „Es war“ ist ein Bruchstück, ein Räthsel, ein grauser Zufall – bis der schaffende Wille dazu sagt: „aber so will ich es! So werde ich's wollen!“¹³⁴

According to Joan Stambaugh, '[r]econciliation with time occurs as willing back. This could mean either of two things: 1. to will backwards in time, so to speak, turning time around, reversing it, or 2. to will things and event back, to will them to come again, to return.'¹³⁵ The second option resembles the eternal recurrence and is explicitly associated by Stambaugh with *amor fati*, whereby the past is its object, equated to *fatum*¹³⁶; the first is 'so obscure that we are

or psychological way, but as part of the cosmos, indeed a very important part. [...] The soul is fate and necessity, fate and turning the need.'

¹³² Z II Erlösung 4.179-80.

¹³³ The other possible solution, to stop willing (the solution brought forward by Schopenhauer) is rejected firmly on several occasions. Z II Inseln: '[...] Wollen befreit: das ist die wahre Lehre von Wille und Freiheit – so lehrt sie euch Zarathustra. Nicht-mehr-wollen und Nicht-mehr-schätzen und Nicht-mehr-schaffen! ach, dass diese grosse Müdigkeit mir stets ferne bleibe!' 4.111. Also, Z II Erlösung: '„Es sei denn, dass der Wille endlich sich selber erlöste und Wollen zu Nicht-Wollen würde –“: doch ihr kennt, meine Brüder, diess Fabellied des Wahnsinns! Weg führte ich euch von diesen Fabelliedern, als ich euch lehrte „der Wille ist ein Schaffender.“' 4.181.

¹³⁴ 4.181. Further in Z this position is affirmed again, Z III Tafeln 4.248-9: 'als Dichter, Räthselrath und Erlöser des Zufalls lehrte ich sie an der Zukunft schaffen, und Alles, das war –, schaffend zu erlösen. Das Vergangne am Menschen zu erlösen und alle „Es war“ umzuschaffen, bis der Wille spricht „Aber so wollte ich es! So werde ich's wollen –“ – Diess hiess ich ihnen Erlösung, Diess allein lehrte ich sie Erlösung heissen. –'

¹³⁵ Stambaugh, J. (1985), 137.

¹³⁶ Magnus, too, associates willing backwards in this context with *amor fati*: Magnus, B. (1978), 150: 'The transformation of "it was" into a "thus I willed it" constitutes freedom from the spirit of evasion. His point, once again, is that our fate ought to be embraced with love; *amor fati*. [...] My present and future are not sealed until I choose. Then, and then alone, does my present and my future become a "fated" past. But to the extent that I "freely" will my being now and in the future, I also "freely" willed my past, "thus I willed it!" And the recognition that we are the authors of our past is to bring to the individual the simultaneous awareness of his responsibility for the present and future.'

not even certain what it would *mean*, to will backwards'.¹³⁷ At the same time, there are passages in *Z* that describe an experience of time that transcends the rational categories of forwards and backwards. One of those is *Vom Gesicht und Räthsel*, in which a complicated account of time is given:

wenn Alles schon da gewesen ist: was hältst du Zwerg von diesem Augenblick? Muss aber dieser Thorweg nicht schon – dagewiesen sein? Und sind nicht solchermaassen fest alle Dinge verknottet, dass dieser Augenblick *alle* kommenden Dinge nach sich zieht? Also – – sich selber noch?¹³⁸

This idea of a circular image of time, in which every moment contains all others at the same time, denotes not only how time may be put upside down (or willed in reversed order), but also how *amor fati*, if it can be situated in this context, can no longer be seen as containing a strict division between object and subject; both are two sides of one coin now.

Was geschah mir: Horch! Flog die Zeit wohl davon? Falle ich nicht? Fiel ich nicht – horch! In den Brunnen der Ewigkeit?¹³⁹

After awaking from what may be called 'some sort of experience of eternity'¹⁴⁰, Zarathustra says:

„Oh Himmel über mich, sprach er seufzend und setzte sich aufrecht, du schaust mir zu? Du horchst meiner wunderlichen Seele zu? Wann trinkst du diesen Tropfen Thau's, der auf alle Erden-Dinge niederfiel, – wann trinkst du diese wunderliche Seele – – wann, Brunnen der Ewigkeit! Du heiterer schauerlicher Mittags-Abgrund! Wenn trinkst du meine Seele in sich zurück?“¹⁴¹

The questions in this passage equate the soul to the 'drop of dew which has fallen upon all earthly things' and ask the heaven above 'when will you, heaven, abyss of noon, well of eternity, drink my soul back into you?'. The soul apparently used to be part of the heaven and is only temporarily (if this word still can be used) separated from that to which it will soon return. The relation with *amor fati* is explained as follows by Stambaugh: 'The soul not only loves fate; the soul is fate. [...] [Which] is not tantamount to saying flatly soul equates fate, soul is the same thing as fate; but soul lives out fate, soul is the living occurrence of fate. This identity also characterised what Spinoza was talking about when he said that "The intellectual love of the mind toward God is the very love with which He loves himself."¹⁴²

What we find here, therefore, is the appearance of a form of *unio mystica*, resembling the 'Cosmic Stoicism' we discussed earlier. Even if we should wary of not accepting the presence of a traditional (transcendent) account of religion, it is clear that a religious element is present.

¹³⁷ Stambaugh, J. (1985), 137.

¹³⁸ *Z* III *Räthsel* 4.200.

¹³⁹ *Z* IV *Mittags* 4.344.

¹⁴⁰ Stambaugh, J. (1985), 140.

¹⁴¹ *Z* IV *Mittags* 4.344-5.

¹⁴² Stambaugh, J. (1985), 141. Spinoza, *Ethics*, V, prop. XXXVI. This love in Spinoza's texts is called *amor dei intellectualis*. Michel Haar formulates the same point slightly differently: Haar, M. (1996), 128: '*amor fati* is nothing but the echo of the love – both jubilant and rational – that Being has for itself.'

To conclude the section on Z I will quote from *Das Nachtwandler-Lied* 10, in which it is even more apparent how every moment is entangled with all other moments, making the world into a web full of loving connections (even if they also include pain), of which our souls are merely a part, being at the same time subject and object of cosmic love.

Eben ward meine Welt vollkommen, Mitternacht ist auch Mittag, – Schmerz ist auch eine Lust, Fluch ist auch ein Segen, Nacht ist auch eine Sonne, – geht davon oder ihr lernt: ein Weiser ist auch ein Narr. Sagtet ihr jemals *Ja* zu Einer Lust? Oh, meine Freunde, so sagtet ihr *Ja* auch zu *allem* Wehe. Alle Dinge sind verkettet, verfädelte, verliebt, – – wolltet ihr jemals Ein Mal Zwei Mal, sprachet ihr jemals „du gefällst mir, Glück! Husch! Augenblick!“ so wolltet ihr *Alles* zurück! – Alles von neuem, Alles ewig, Alles verkettet, verfädelte, verliebt, oh so *liebtet* ihr die Welt, – – ihr Ewigen, liebt sie ewig und allezeit: und auch zum Weh sprecht ihr: vergeh, aber komm zurück! *Denn alle Lust will – Ewigkeit!*¹⁴³

We may conclude from the *Nachlass* passage of *amor fati* written in 1884 (NL 25[500]) that, even if Z does not contain any explicit references to this concept, the thought of it is present in this book.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the concept seems changed in comparison to 1881/2. It has received a more religious connotation, explicitly connected with a mysterious account of time (i.e. the eternal return, or the eternal becoming, whereby all moments contain those of the entire history), the will to power, and the innocence of creation (related to the future ideal of the sage or the *Übermensch*). Whereas we dismissed the possibility of *amor fati* as *unio mystica* earlier, the above passage reveals the aspiration to occupy a radically immanent standpoint in the relation between things. Instead, the difficulties explicitly related to *amor fati* we encountered previously, regarding maddening ‘Furien’ and a ‘schreckliche Herkunft’, are absent.

What is more, Z reveals that fate does not exclude creativity or productivity. This is compatible with an understanding of *amor fati* being self-referential: the genitive of *fati* could be seen as referring to the subject (in addition to the traditional account of ‘*fati*’ as being a genitive objective). Fate understood as one’s creative ‘will’ or ‘soul’ being the source of love emphasises Nietzsche’s understanding of the cosmos as an immanent given in which everything is connected, including all moments of time (‘Und sind nicht solchermassen fest alle Dinge verknotet, dass dieser Augenblick *alle* kommenden Dinge nach sich zieht?’). Although it is impossible to change history, Z contains some suggestions that may point at *amor fati* containing a productive attitude to the past, mysteriously ‘willing back’ everything, thereby affirming all instances of time and cosmos including itself.

1.5 *AMOR FATI, DIONYSOS, AND NIHILISM*

The other elements left unexplained so far, the Dionysian and nihilism, appear for the first time explicitly connected to *amor fati* in the following *Nachlass* fragment of 1888.

¹⁴³ Z IV Nachtwandler-Lied 4.402.

¹⁴⁴ As is also claimed by Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 38.

6. *NL* 16[32] Eine solche Experimental-Philosophie, wie ich sie lebe, nimmt versuchsweise selbst die Möglichkeiten des grundsätzlichen Nihilismus vorweg: ohne daß damit gesagt wäre, daß sie bei einem Nein, bei einer Negation, bei einem Willen zum Nein stehen bliebe. Sie will vielmehr bis zum Umgekehrten hindurch — bis zu einem *dionysischen Jasagen* zur Welt, wie sie ist, ohne Abzug, Ausnahme und Auswahl — sie will den ewigen Kreislauf, — dieselben Dinge, dieselbe Logik und Unlogik der Knoten. Höchster Zustand, den ein Philosoph erreichen kann: dionysisch zum Dasein stehn –: meine Formel dafür ist *amor fati*... — Hierzu gehört, die bisher verneinten Seiten des Daseins nicht nur als nothwendig zu begreifen, sondern als wünschenswerth: und nicht nur als wünschenswerth in Hinsicht auf die bisher bejahten Seiten (etwa als deren Complementary oder Vorbedingungen), sondern um ihrer selber willen, als der mächtigeren, fruchtbareren, wahren Seiten des Daseins, in denen sich sein Wille deutlicher ausspricht.¹⁴⁵

Amor fati is presented in this passages as a 'formula', namely that of a 'Zustand' that relates in a certain way to 'Dasein'. This Dionysian state is the highest possible for a philosopher. In order to attain it one should adopt an experimental kind of philosophy (an 'Experimental-Philosophie'), one that anticipates the possibilities for nihilism, but that refuses to negate only. It rather wants to attain a 'Dionysian affirmation' of the world, an affirmation so radical that it can truly wish for the 'bisher verneinten Seiten des Daseins' (as already indicated in 1.2.3). The 'ewigen Kreislauf' indicates that the thought of the eternal return is implied in its most extreme form, whereby everything without exception ('dieselben Dinge, dieselbe Logik und Unlogik der Knoten') is willingly affirmed within the same structure and in exactly the way it appears.¹⁴⁶

What is new in this passage is also the reference to nihilism (a term first introduced in the published works in *JGB* and used most frequently in the years 1885-1888¹⁴⁷). We may understand it here as the insight that the world lacks the elements that we would traditionally need in order to affirm it: beauty, order, purpose, meaning, etc. (i.e. the 'anthropomorphisms' referred to in *FW* 109). Dionysian affirmation, i.e., *amor fati*, wants to submit itself to negation, to remain open to this absence – but only so that *through* this process full affirmation is reached. This brings us back to the 'Furien' and the 'schreckliche Herkunft': *amor fati* seems to demand something almost impossible, namely to reject and affirm at the same time.¹⁴⁸ In Yovel's words: 'It is essential to see that *amor fati*, with its celebrating assumption of immanence, runs counter to normal human psychology. Ordinary people, Nietzsche expects, will experience pure immanence as a yoke and an oppression; their natural response to it and to recurrence is pessimism and world-weariness, the depression of their vital powers – or the

¹⁴⁵ 13.492, spring/summer 1888.

¹⁴⁶ In the famous *Nachlass* passage on nihilism, the *Lenzer Heide* fragment of 1887, Nietzsche explicitly denotes the eternal return as the most extreme form of nihilism. *NL* 5[71] 12.213 '6. Denken wir diesen Gedanken in seiner furchtbarsten Form: das Dasein, so wie es ist, ohne Sinn und Ziel, aber unvermeidlich wiederkehrend, ohne ein Finale ins Nichts: „die ewige Wiederkehr“. Das ist die extremste Form des Nihilismus: das Nichts (das „Sinnlose“) ewig!

¹⁴⁷ Van Tongeren, P. (2012), 64-5.

¹⁴⁸ According to Thiele, L.P. (1991), it should be understood as a paradox, 93: 'We are confronted with a paradox. The lover negates and affirms.'

various forms of escape and self-deception current in religion and traditional philosophy (Spinoza not excepted). It takes a powerful act of defiant affirmation, a supreme “nevertheless,” to transform the oppression of immanence into its opposite, joy and celebrating power; and this requires a new and rare kind of psychology, the one which constitutes and expresses the *Übermensch*.¹⁴⁹

The “nevertheless” Yovel mentions, and the ‘new and rare kind of psychology’, must be understood in relation with what we saw in the *Nachlass* of 1884: ‘Bejahren und Gutheißen aus einem überströmenden Gefühle von gestaltender Macht’; several texts in *Z* and also in *FW V* stress the importance of a wealth of inner (creative and fertile) forces that make possible this counter-intuitive affirmation.¹⁵⁰ This Dionysian ‘tour-de-force’ is furthermore related to the tragic. The aesthetic affirmation of pessimism developed already in *GT* now seems to reach its fullest meaning and significance. In this context the final few pages of *Göttzen-Dämmerung* (*GD*; written in 1888) are worth looking at. Its final page is a full citation of the text quoted before in *Z*’s *Von alten und neuen Tafeln* (‘wollt ihr nicht Schicksale sein und Unerbittliche: wie könntet ihr mit mir – siegen? Und wenn eure Härte nicht blitzen und scheiden und zerschneiden will: wie könntet ihr einst mit mir – schaffen?’), and the preceding pages are a homage to what Nietzsche owes the ancients (‘Was ich den Alten verdanke’).

GD Alten 4 Ich war der erste, der, zum Verständniss des älteren, des noch reichen und selbst überströmenden hellenischen Instinkts, jenes wundervolle Phänomen ernst nahm, das den Namen des Dionysos trägt: es ist einzig erklärbar als einem *Zuviel* von Kraft. [...] Denn erst in den dionysischen Mysterien, in der Psychologie des dionysischen Zustands spricht sich die *Grundthatsache* des hellenischen Instinkts aus – sein „Wille zum Leben“. Was verbürgte sich der Hellene mit diesen Mysterien? Das ewige Leben, die ewige Wiederkehr des Lebens; die Zukunft in der Vergangenheit verheissen und geweiht; das triumphirende Ja zum Leben über Tod und Wandel hinaus; das *wahre* Leben als das Gesamt-Fortleben durch die Zeugung, durch die Mysterien der Geschlechtlichkeit.¹⁵¹

This passage shows how Nietzsche regards himself as the first who fully came to understand the secret behind the phenomenon of the Greek god Dionysos: the ‘rich and even overflowing Hellenic instinct’, ‘a *too much* of power’. The Greeks possessed a ‘will to life’, one that was capable of achieving that which was described above as the difficult ‘*dionysischen Jasagen zur Welt*’, thereby affirming also the necessity of negation, ‘das triumphirende Ja zum Leben über Tod und Wandel hinaus’. What is more, this passage explains how the pain associated with

¹⁴⁹ Yovel, Y. (1989), 127. Similarly, Thiele, L.P. (1991), 101-2, writes: ‘The horror of a meaningless life first must be embraced before the innocence of a Nietzschean morality is attained. The rapture of *amor fati* is derivative of a nihilistic terror which never ceases to haunt and there are few, Nietzsche insisted, that are strong enough to transform suffering into joy, terror into rapture, and anxious uncertainty into wonder.’ Reginster, B. (2006), Nishigami, K. (1993), and Van Tongeren, P. (2012), 148-9 all emphasise the challenge of *amor fati* in the light of nihilism.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. *FW* 370 3.620: ‘Der Reichste an Lebensfülle, der dionysische Gott und Mensch, kann sich nicht nur den Anblick des Fürchterlichen und Fragwürdigen gönnen, sondern selbst die fürchterliche That und jeden Luxus von Zerstörung, Zersetzung, Verneinung; bei ihm erscheint das Böse, Unsinnige und Hässliche gleichsam erlaubt, in Folge eines Ueberschusses von zeugenden, befruchtenden Kräften, welcher aus jeder Wüste noch ein üppiges Fruchthland zu schaffen im Stande ist.’

¹⁵¹ 6.158-9.

destruction and death was understood to be sacred by the Greeks: the Dionysian mysteries were part of a celebration of procreation. Suffering was celebrated as lying at the very heart of life itself: every future life *must* bring with it an amount of pain, not only because of the pains of labour, but also because all new life implies the death of something old.¹⁵² This Dionysian 'deepest instinct of life' is experienced as religious,¹⁵³ the tragic aspect of which deserves to be emphasised, so it seems: it receives extra weight as the penultimate section of *GD*, but moreover because it is taken up once again in Nietzsche's reflection on *GT* in *EH*.

EH (GT) 3 „[...] die ewige Lust des Werdens *selbst zu sein*, jene Lust, die auch noch die *Lust am Vernichten* in sich schliesst ...“ In diesem Sinne habe ich das Recht, mich selber als den ersten *tragischen Philosophen* zu verstehn [...]. Die Bejahung des Vergehens und *Vernichtens*, das Entscheidende in einer dionysischen Philosophie, das Ja-sagen zu Gegensatz und Krieg, das *Werden*¹⁵⁴

In conclusion we can say that the passage on *amor fati* of 1888 stresses its relation with tragedy and in an even stronger way with religion, even if the '*unio mystica*' seems to be less important here. The affirmation of the painful elements of the world, even of destruction, is seen as sacred in its celebration of the mystery of life's fertility and the creation of all new life. *Amor fati* in this context cannot be seen in separation from Dionysos therefore, nor from the eternal return, nihilism, and the tragic and creative affirmation of a world of emptiness and mere becoming; an affirmation reached only if one's psychology is strong, (pluralistically) rich and creative enough to affirm the negative, the painful, i.e. the necessity of death and destruction, in order to give birth.

1.6 AMOR FATI IN 1888

1888 is the year in which five of the ten *amor fati* passages can be found. Apart from the one discussed above there are four, three of which appear in published works. Two of these can be found in *EH*, the other in *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (NW). One from *EH* is often quoted; not only because it explicitly relates *amor fati* to 'greatness' (providing therefore an argument for those who claim that *amor fati* is either therapeutic, leading to greatness, or else the greatness itself, which makes it the effect of therapy), but also because it contrasts love to other possible attitudes towards fate, thereby illuminating again what the attitude of love requires.

7. *EH* klug 10 Meine Formel für die Grösse am Menschen ist *amor fati*: dass man Nichts anders haben will, vorwärts nicht, rückwärts nicht, in alle Ewigkeit nicht.

¹⁵² Stambaugh, J. (1985), 136: 'To live in a Dionysian relation to existence means to affirm the elements of creation and destruction as inherent in eternal recurrence.'

¹⁵³ Another argument for regarding the Dionysian as a religion (and a fatalistic one moreover) can be found in *GD Streifzüge* 49. 'Ein solcher *freigewordner Geist* steht mit einem freudigen und vertrauenden Fatalismus mitten im All, im *Glauben*, dass nur das Einzelne verwerflich ist, dass im Ganzen sich Alles erlöst und bejaht – *er verneint nicht mehr*... Aber ein solcher Glaube ist der höchste aller möglichen Glauben: ich habe ihn auf den Namen des *Dionysos* getauft.' 6.152.

¹⁵⁴ 6.312-3. Nietzsche associates this position with Heraclitus. Nietzsche's view on Heraclitus is considered in more detail in 2.3.

Das Nothwendige nicht bloss ertragen, noch weniger verhehlen – aller Idealismus ist Verlogenheit vor dem Nothwendigen –, sondern es *lieben*...¹⁵⁵

According to Han-Pile, opposing love to 'ertragen' ('merely bear') is an explicit reference to the Stoics, as 'the Stoic option involves the rejection of all emotions towards fate', reminding us of Ure's position.¹⁵⁶ The opposition between loving and 'merely bear[ing]' fate is repeated, moreover, in the passage of NW: 'man soll es nicht nur tragen, man soll es *lieben*... *Amor fati*', providing an even stronger argument against love as merely passive resignation. Connecting this with the Dionysian attitude described in the previous section, we may arrive at an analysis of love in the passages of 1888 as a creative (and thus 'active', although not in the sense of 'choosing'¹⁵⁷) desire, different from the 'medio-passive' or agapic account argued for by Han-Pile. Although she is right that an 'erotic' interpretation is implausible because of the unattractiveness of the desired object, her account still seems to be mistaken insofar as it interprets love as a kind of divine gift, associated with 'grace'. The other *Nachlass* passage of 1888 explicitly associates the love of *amor fati* with 'willing': 'Ich will Nichts anders, auch rückwärts nicht, – ich *durfte* nichts anders wollen... *Amor fati*...'. This association between love and will indeed suggests a very active state ('Zustand'), grounded in desires rather than received in a passive, contemplative state of acceptance.¹⁵⁸

Han-Pile moreover associates the other option, 'verhehlen' (to 'conceal') with Leibniz.¹⁵⁹ This reference to idealism is interesting, as it forms a contrast to the first occurrences of *amor fati* as well (especially NL 15[19] and 15[20]). Whereas these allowed for and even encouraged the adoption of an ideal, this aphorism rejects ideals as 'Verlogenheit vor dem Nothwendigen'. This also seems to imply a different notion of love, one that takes more seriously the radically immanent implications of the eternal return in comparison to the first occurrences of *amor fati*. But it may fit the Dionysian affirmation of immanence described above, as that, too, excludes any 'beyond' or 'Verlogenheit'.

¹⁵⁵ 6.297.

¹⁵⁶ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 6.

¹⁵⁷ In this context it might be interesting to refer to the passage in *EH* (Z) 3 on 'inspiration': 'Hat Jemand, Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, einen deutlichen Begriff davon, was Dichter starker Zeitalter *Inspiration* nannten? [...] Mit dem geringsten Rest von Aberglauben in sich würde man in der That die Vorstellung, bloss Incarnation, bloss Mundstück, bloss medium übermächtiger Gewalten zu sein, kaum abzuweisen wissen. [...] Man hört, man sucht nicht; man nimmt, man fragt nicht, wer da giebt; wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf, mit Nothwendigkeit, in der Form ohne Zögern, – ich habe nie eine Wahl gehabt. [...] Dies ist *meine* Erfahrung von Inspiration'.

¹⁵⁸ In opposition thus to Löwith, K. (1997), who sees *amor fati* as a state of 'will-lessness'. Several authors disagree with him; Reginster, B. (2006), 208-9: 'Löwith's interpretation of *amor fati* in terms of a kind of will-lessness does not sit well with Nietzsche's own characterizations of it. [...] [R]esignation certainly does not amount to the "love" in terms of which Nietzsche describes the affirmation of life'. Also Han-Pile, B. (2009), 24-5 ft. 1: 'Löwith does understand *amor fati* as a state, but one which is 'no longer a willing but a condition in which the will no longer wills anything' (Löwith 1997: 79-80). Yet to describe *amor fati* as a form of 'will-lessness' is far too Schopenhauerian and misses the point of Nietzsche's criticism of resignation entirely'.

¹⁵⁹ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 6: "still less conceal it" [...] is most likely the Leibnizean strategy sketched out above, which fallaciously minimises the reality of suffering'. 5, referring to the task of re-evaluating fate: 'Leibniz claims that on the whole our world is the best possible and offers various forms of reduction to deny or at least diminish the negativity of perceived evils.' She refers to *Theodicy* (1990) §20-30.

In discussing this *EH* passage Han-Pile also raises the question of therapy, albeit indirectly. On the 'status of these infinitives' ('ertragen', 'verhehlen', 'lieben') she writes: 'they can be read either as prescriptive, laying out a programme, or descriptive, expanding on the content of *amor fati*.'¹⁶⁰ Han-Pile's remark rightly suggests that we could read the infinitives as merely elaborating on how a 'great man' deals with necessity, excluding any reference to therapy or morality. This interpretation seems to be most in line, moreover, with all other *amor fati* passages of this year, as they all seem to describe Nietzsche's own situation more than providing the readers with pieces of advice.¹⁶¹ The *Nachlass* passage discussed in the previous section presents *amor fati* as a 'state' ('Zustand'), a certain way of relating to existence ('dionysisch zum Dasein stehn'), but does not say anything about how to achieve this state nor that we should do so. The opening sentence of the passage introduces the relevant philosophy as explicitly Nietzsche's ('Eine solche Experimental-Philosophie, wie ich sie lebe'). And to a great extent the same can be said about the other passages. Strikingly, two of the remaining three passages refer to *amor fati* as Nietzsche's 'most inner nature' ('innerste Natur'). Both of these are written in a significantly biographical tone. The first appears in *EH*, in a reflection on *Der Fall Wagner* (written also in 1888) (though in the passage quoted the reflection is on *Z*), the second is part of the Epilog of *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (*NW*), written after *EH*.

8. *EH* (WA) 4 Was gar meinen Zarathustra anbetrifft, wer von meinen Freunden hätte mehr darin gesehen als eine unerlaubte, zum Glück vollkommen gleichgültige Anmaassung?... Zehn Jahre: und Niemand in Deutschland hat sich eine Gewissensschuld daraus gemacht, meinen Namen gegen das absurde Stillschweigen zu vertheidigen, unter dem er vergraben lag: ein Ausländer, ein Däne war es, der zuerst dazu genug Feinheit des Instinkts *und Muth* hatte, der sich über meine angeblichen Freunde empörte... An welcher deutschen Universität wären heute Vorlesungen über meine Philosophie möglich, wie sie letztes Frühjahr der damit noch einmal mehr bewiesene Psycholog Dr. Georg Brandes in Kopenhagen gehalten hat? — Ich selber habe nie an Alledem gelitten; das *Nothwendige* verletzt mich nicht; *amor fati* ist meine innerste Natur. Dies schliesst aber nicht aus, dass ich die Ironie liebe, sogar die welthistorische Ironie.¹⁶²

Although Nietzsche denies having ever 'suffered' from being an invisible and unappreciated philosopher ('*necessity* does not offend me, *amor fati* is my most inner nature'), it seems difficult not to see the silence on *Z* as something that affected Nietzsche personally. This passage seems far from offering his readers a therapy; it rather denotes *amor fati* as characterising Nietzsche's most intimate nature. The same goes for the next passage from *NW*; Nietzsche reflects on the 'most difficult years of his life' and comes to the conclusion that his

¹⁶⁰ Han-Pile, B. (2009), 6.

¹⁶¹ Even if Domino, B. (2012) claims that the fact that Nietzsche fails to love fate implies that he cannot be this 'great man'; 289-90: '*Ecce Homo* chronicles Nietzsche's spectacular failure to love his fate.' 284-5: 'I argue that Nietzsche's chronic failure to love his own fate in *Ecce Homo* is strategic. Specifically, his self-reported inability to love his own fate forces readers to determine whether *amor fati* is an idea worth adopting on its own terms rather than on the basis of its pedigree.' This interpretation, thought-provoking as it is, does no justice, I believe, to the seriousness with which Nietzsche writes about *amor fati*, nor to the reference to himself as a 'fate' as I will discuss below.

¹⁶² 6.363.

'inner nature' has taught him to not only accept but love these years as part of a 'greater economy'.

9. NW Epilog 1 Ich habe mich oft gefragt, ob ich den schwersten Jahren meines Lebens nicht tiefer verpflichtet bin als irgend welchen anderen. So wie meine innerste Natur es mich lernt, 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... *Amor fati*: das ist meine innerste Natur. —¹⁶³

The last (*Nachlass*) fragment also approaches *amor fati* not so much as a morality or therapy, but rather as the way in which history can be affirmed. Nietzsche sees the manifestation of himself made possible only by the awful incidents of the past: the Germans, in particular Bismarck, Kant, Luther, even Christianity (understood here as dangerous and seductive life-negation); all of these can be affirmed because they caused their opposite in a 'higher economics of culture' (even though the events should be affirmed in themselves, and not only, as we saw in the previous section, in the light of what they effectuated). Christianity has given birth to its opposite, the 'höchste Bejahung': Nietzsche.

10. NL 25[7] Ich wäre nicht möglich ohne eine Gegensatz-Art von Rasse, ohne Deutsche, ohne *diese* Deutschen, ohne Bismarck, ohne 1848, ohne „Freiheitskriege“, ohne Kant, ohne Luther selbst... Die großen Cultur-Verbrechen der Deutschen rechtfertigen sich in einer höheren Ökonomik der Cultur... Ich will Nichts anders, auch rückwärts nicht, – ich *durfte* nichts anders wollen... *Amor fati*... Selbst das Christenthum wird nothwendig: die höchste Form, die gefährlichste, die verführerischste im Nein zum Leben fordert erst seine höchste Bejahung heraus – mich...¹⁶⁴

Yet even though all passages seem to have Nietzsche himself as the common denominator, suggesting a descriptive, non-prescriptive reading of *amor fati*, we should keep in mind the sentence we encountered previously: 'Aber lassen wir Herrn Nietzsche: was geht es uns an, dass Herr Nietzsche wieder gesund wurde?'¹⁶⁵ More is at stake than Nietzsche's biography. In the passages just quoted we can see how Nietzsche understands his work as part of world history. Perhaps most clearly in NL 25[7], of which the subsequent sentences relativise the last two thousand years to an extreme degree ('Was sind zuletzt diese zwei Jahrtausende? Unser *lehrreichstes* Experiment, eine Vivisektion am Leben selbst... Bloß zwei Jahrtausende!'). The Epilog of NW, too, regards necessity 'aus der Höhe gesehn und im Sinne einer grossen Ökonomie'; and EH (WA) 4 speaks about 'die welthistorische Ironie'. This last passage significantly finishes with an explicit statement regarding the impact of Nietzsche's philosophy for the future of humanity: 'Und dies in einem Augenblicke, wo eine unsägliche Verantwortlichkeit auf mir liegt [...]. Denn ich trage das Schicksal der Menschheit auf der Schulter.'¹⁶⁶ It is immediately followed by the title of the next Book: 'Warum ich ein Schicksal bin.'

¹⁶³ 6.436.

¹⁶⁴ 13.641.

¹⁶⁵ FW Vorrede 2 3.347.

¹⁶⁶ 6.364.

Amor fati is a description both of Nietzsche's 'most inner nature', one that dictates him to affirm the totality of history, and of a major historical event, namely that of affirmation, reached in the figure of Nietzsche. Again we may come to see '*fati*' both as an objective and subjective genitive. If we understand it as object, we can see how *amor fati* denotes Nietzsche's affirmation of history, understood as a 'higher economy' in which the negative is intimately related to and brings about the positive. Fate as subject denotes Nietzsche himself; in that case the affirmative love is the outcome of a fated nature (Nietzsche). This second interpretation of *amor fati* brings us back to the notion of immanence, as the love of fate must be seen as an inevitable and historical necessity, embodied by Nietzsche but without him having had any 'choice'. The idea that *amor fati* might encompass both these possibilities at the same time can be argued for on the basis of the following *Nachlass* passage written as early as spring 1884.

NL 25[158] Dieselbe Ehrfurcht, die er, rückwärts schauend, dem ganzen Schicksal weiht, hat er sich selber *mit* zu weihen. **Ego fatum.**¹⁶⁷

Nietzsche's approach to himself as a fate, or part of fate, is not new. Already in 1879, in *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (WS) he rejects what he calls 'Turkish fatalism', a kind of fatalism that sees human beings as separated from fate.

WS 61 *Türkenfatalismus*. – Der Türkenfatalismus hat den Grundfehler, dass er den Menschen und das Fatum als zwei geschiedene Dinge einander gegenüberstellt [...]. In Wahrheit ist jeder Mensch selber ein Stück Fatum; wenn er in der angegebenen Weise dem Fatum zu widerstreben meint, so vollzieht sich eben darin auch das Fatum; der Kampf ist eine Einbildung, aber ebenso jene Resignation in das Fatum; alle diese Einbildungen sind im Fatum eingeschlossen.¹⁶⁸

We should view the remarks we have encountered in Z in a similar way therefore: 'Du Schickung meiner Seele, die ich Schicksal heisse!'¹⁶⁹, and 'mein schaffender Wille, mein Schicksal'.¹⁷⁰ In the *Nachlass* of 1883 we find a comparable statement: '„Ich bin für alles Kommende ein fatum!“'¹⁷¹, and in *GD* we read: 'Der Einzelne ist ein Stück fatum, von Verne und von Hinten, ein Gesetz mehr, eine Nothwendigkeit mehr für Alles, was kommt und sein wird.'¹⁷² We may even see the motto of *EH* in this light: 'Wie man wird, was man ist'.

This last quotation, 'wie man wird was man ist' can be (and has been¹⁷³) interpreted as announcing a certain prescriptive program; yet, keeping the descriptive passages of *amor fati*

¹⁶⁷ 11.55. Ôkôchi, R. (1972), whose analysis of *amor fati* resembles this one, makes this same point using the following formulation, 85: 'Das das Fatum bejahende Ego ist zugleich Fatum.'

¹⁶⁸ 2.580.

¹⁶⁹ Z III Tafeln 4.268-9.

¹⁷⁰ Z II Inseln 4.110-1.

¹⁷¹ NL 16[64] 10.521.

¹⁷² *GD* Moral 6 6.87.

¹⁷³ Schatzki, T.R. (1994) for instance, who argues that Nietzsche's naturalism is at the heart of his philosophy. 157-8: 'At a [...] deeper level, living in accordance with nature prescribes an ideal of human perfectability. Perfect is the life most in accordance with the essence (*Wesen*) of life or nature [...]. Living in accordance with the essence of life is the deepest thought animating Nietzsche's ethics.' See also Babich, B. (2003).

in mind, we should be aware that it cannot be interpreted as a traditional kind of morality. We find in *GD* an example of the difference.

GD Moral 6 [...] Und wirklich, es gab consequente Moralisten, sie wollten den Menschen anders, nämlich tugendhaft, sie wollten ihn nach ihrem Bilde, nämlich als Mucker: dazu *verneinten* sie die Welt! Keine kleine Tollheit!¹⁷⁴

Rather, if we do wish to keep open a prescriptive interpretation of *amor fati* and the *EH* motto 'wie man wird was man ist', we should remind ourselves of the project that may be referred to as 'naturalism', a program referred to already in *FW* 109: 'Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen!' ¹⁷⁵ The formulation of *amor fati* as 'meine innerste Natur' may well be read in this way. If we want to see *amor fati* as containing some advice, or providing a kind of example, it will be one that goes beyond the difference between prescriptive and descriptive. In Armstrong's words: it is all about 'being capable of transfiguring and even perfecting [...] nature, *precisely through* an understanding of natural necessity and an acceptance of its own nature as "a piece of fate"'. ¹⁷⁶ Or, as Paul van Tongeren formulates it: 'if there is some form of religiosity in Nietzsche, it has to be situated at this point, where the moral distinction between what is and what should be has been left behind.' ¹⁷⁷

In order to be complete, one last element needs to be added to this account. For although the naturalistic tendency of Nietzsche's later works suggests that we should 'become who we are', that is, accept and even love the way we are while excluding any wish to change, it is argued that this prescription entails, paradoxically as it may seem, a sense of 'self-overcoming' or 'self-transformation'. ¹⁷⁸ The most striking example of this almost Buddhist attitude can be found in Book I of *Z*, '*Von drei Verwandlungen*', in which a transition is introduced from camel ('Was ist schwer? so fragt der tragsame Geist, so kniet er nieder, dem Kameele gleich, und will gut beladen sein') to lion ('Freiheit sich schaffen und ein heiliges Nein auch vor der Pflicht') to the yes-saying child – not to be understood as a prescriptive device, telling us that we should 'actively' attempt to achieve, but a mere description of what happens if one allows one's spirit to follow its own path. ¹⁷⁹

Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen. ¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ 6.87.

¹⁷⁵ 3.469.

¹⁷⁶ Armstrong, A. (2013), 7.

¹⁷⁷ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 299.

¹⁷⁸ Yovel, Y. (1989) detects a similarity between Spinoza and Nietzsche on this subject, 113-4: 'Each inspires his readers to seek a rare ethical achievement – *amor dei* in Spinoza, *amor fati* in Nietzsche [...]. The very notion of moral obligation (or moral duty) has no sense in a strictly immanent system, and must, in both Spinoza and Nietzsche, make way for *self-overcoming* as the key ethical concept. Ethical achievements must have nature as their sole source, substrate, and principle. A strict naturalism goes hand in hand in both Nietzsche and Spinoza with a powerful ethical project [...] Self-overcoming does not impose external constraints upon life and the emotions, but lets life reshape and sublimate itself.'

¹⁷⁹ It is referred to in Ôkôchi, R. (1972), an article dedicated to the parallels between *amor fati* and Buddhism, as well as in Van der Braak, A. (2011), 127, which reflects on the same theme.

¹⁸⁰ *Z I Verwandlungen* 4.31.

What can we conclude from these last passages of *amor fati*? Three main points. One: the stress on immanence we noticed from *Z* onwards is persistently present here as well. Yet unlike the religious *unio mystica* of *Z*, and unlike the Dionysian affirmation of an eternal return of nihilistic creation and destruction, the emphasis here has been on being part of history. Regarding himself as a 'Schicksal', Nietzsche takes himself and his affirmation to be a necessary event in the great economy of history, brought about by its negating forces (Christianity); the love that follows from this fated affirmation concerns the totality of history, and includes Nietzsche as a fate belonging to it.

Secondly, the *amor fati* of 1888 dismisses any kind of idealism. This, we have seen, is different from the earlier *amor fati* passages. In *Z* we still encountered the possibility of creatively striving for the ideal of 'the sage' or the *Übermensch*, a possibility that seems to be dismissed in 1888 in favour of the affirmation of radical and grim immanence, focusing more on the past than the future. Also the *Nachlass* passage of 1881 associates love with adopting an ideal, suggesting that the object of love – i.e. of the ideal – should be as specific as possible, excluding the possibility of loving *everything*. In 1888, instead, it is precisely a version of totality that is to be affirmed, for which no distortion is allowed, nor any phantasy of a 'beyond'. As a consequence, the assumption that love may have a distorting effect, due to its artistic and creative nature, seems no longer to be an issue of importance in 1888.

Thirdly, we have explored the extent to which we can see the *amor fati* passages of 1888 as signifying a kind of therapy. We can conclude once again that it is implausible that Nietzsche ever intended *amor fati* as a kind of moral program, a set of rules of behaviour to adopt in order to attain the 'greatness' referred to in *EH*. This does not eliminate the possibility on the other hand that there is a hidden 'ethical' agenda to be detected, one that can be referred to in terms of 'naturalism'. This program then recommends that we no longer approach ourselves from the perspective of certain moral expectations that do no justice to the 'piece of fate' we are; rather, we should 'become who we are' and allow our fate to develop along its very own laws.¹⁸¹

1.7 CONCLUSION

The examination of the relevant passages containing the expression *amor fati* has offered us an overview, which now allows us to reach some preliminary conclusions concerning the differences between the early and late occurrences. Whereas *FW* 276 presents *amor fati* in a carefully tentative, even hesitant way, wishing for it as something that *may* be attained some day in the future ('Ich will immer mehr lernen, das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen: — so werde ich Einer von Denen sein, welche die Dinge schön machen. Amor fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe!'; 'Alles in Allem und Grossen: ich will irgendwann einmal nur noch ein Ja-sagender sein!'¹⁸²); the last few passages seem to imply that what Nietzsche wished for in 1882 became reality in 1888. Not only did Nietzsche successfully accomplish the

¹⁸¹ Admittedly, 'to allow' would be the wrong word, since it still betrays the presence of the 'old' morality of choice and self-mastery. Our language seems unfit to express what is going on.

¹⁸² 3.521.

affirmation of 'fate' ('das ist meine innerste Natur'), that is, the immanent and nihilistic history and future of the eternal return; it has been, moreover, his self-asserted fate to be himself the event of affirmation after a relatively long history ('Was sind zuletzt diese zwei Jahrtausende?') of negation.

Secondly, we have seen that the element of immanence becomes ever more prominent from Z onwards. The idea that *amor fati* is a religious concept gains credibility from Z onwards after being deemed implausible for the passages of 1881 and 1882, including the letter to Franz Overbeck in which *amor fati* is denoted a 'Gott-Ergebenheit'. But it takes different forms. In Z it is related to the experience of time, whereby the idea that each moment contains the entire history and future of the universe (a radical version of the eternal return of the same) is presented as a kind of 'mystical experience of eternity'. We are all part of a world in which everything is 'verkettet, verfädelt, verliebt', making possible an interpretation of *amor fati* in which the objective genitive of '*fati*' can be seen as a subjective genitive at the same time. The idea that we merely exist as small elements of a much greater play of forces ('wills to power') was related then to the phenomena of '*unio mystica*' and 'Cosmic Stoicism', denoting the experience of the absence of boundaries between oneself and the cosmos/God. In the passages of 1888, the God Dionysos enters the stage, announcing a kind of religion that celebrates the sacredness of all birth. Only the acknowledgement of and full concurrence with the fact that with every birth comes pain and destruction can help us adopt an affirmative, Dionysian, creative attitude in the face of nihilism. The other passages of 1888, finally, introduce a kind of immanence interwoven with the fatality of history and nature. Being a fated part of both of them means on the one hand that no 'ought' can be deduced; on the other hand it also contains the paradoxical task to 'become who we are' and so turn into the innocent child of 'sanctified yes-saying'.

It follows from these observations that the *amor fati* of Z and afterwards may be more mystical, but less mysterious at the same time. The questions concerning the meaning of *amor fati* posed at the beginning of this chapter could be answered to a great extent if they were addressed to the later passages. We know what is loved (the eternal return, fated nature and history, destruction and creation, and especially immanence, which includes ourselves in the fate to be loved); we know what love is (full affirmation, grounded in our inner drives and desires), we know that it can be understood as a moral 'therapy' only in the minimal sense of returning our attention to the fated beings we are. Yet, even though all these answers raise many further questions, the earlier texts remain more problematic and obscure in comparison. The reference to ideals there and the warning not to choose totality as the object of love seem to point to a completely different, less inclusive, object to be loved. The love of oneself was discussed in section 1.2.4, but not in the sense of it being a radically immanent *fatum* as it appears to be in 1888. The exact identification of *amor*'s object remains ambiguous therefore. Also, the reference to 'Wegsehen' in FW 276 forms a great contrast to what we read in EH: 'Das Nothwendige nicht [...] verhehlen – aller Idealismus ist Verlogenheit vor dem Nothwendigen'. If the texts of 1881 require selection, what does this entail? And finally, whereas the love of the later *amor fati* passages seems to unequivocally denote full affirmation, this too appears to be different in 1881 and 1882, as love is associated with aesthetic distortion there. This problematic association seems to have disappeared later on.

Pointing out these differences is not to say that the *amor fati* of the later years is of less interest, nor that it is more easily attained. But it is of interest for our purposes regarding the influence of Stoicism. For if *amor fati* is a Stoic idea from the start, would this not require that it should be the early version rather than the later that resembles Stoicism? How are we to explain that the idea of 'Cosmic Stoicism' fits the later occurrences better? Also: if the first occurrences of *amor fati* are influenced by Stoicism, could an investigation of Nietzsche's reception of Stoicism help us to develop a more cohesive account of it, avoiding an interpretation that anachronistically refers to the later texts? In short: could a study that is similar to Ure's help us come to a more refined analysis of the *amor fati* of 1881 and 1882? In order to answer these questions, I propose to examine Nietzsche's reception of Stoicism (chapters 2-4) and then focus the results of this study on the first occurrences of *amor fati* in the early 1880's (chapter 5).

