

The Non-Regrettable Tattoo

My first tattoo was accompanied by the question, before and after - Won't you regret it? Its intensity amplified as I was sixteen. This question, I think, has tremendous philosophical importance. It assumes certain ontological positions, and in its commonality as thought and response in such situations, information about the structure of Now, of Is: the Ontological Langue.

Won't you regret the tattoo? As is in language, the question is not *just* the question. But the implicit assumptions it carries, particularly the ontological ones. Hinting at a highly probable possibility, that one's future self will perceive this past decision as a matter of regret. And that the future outweighs the past, an increased significance on the former's actions. That it is more you, closer to the "true" you, the experiences since helping discover who you truly are.

Now, a formalization. Take the current self S_c and the future self S_f . First, the assumption that S_f will find the actions of S_c not correct, in high probability. Not correct, with respect to - yourself; the standard of authenticity. With time, the self learns through experience, and approximates who they truly are - S_T .

Tattoos offer a stronger case for backlash, in related matters. They are permanent, even laser surgeries have limits. Thus, it requires more careful consideration, as to see if one desires it authentically. Notice the ontological presupposition, the journey of the individual, to a destination - a return, a discovery, of their true self.

Ontological Langue: The Is and The New - Here 'ontological langues' prove to be accurate and a misnomer at once. Langue, as borrowed from Sausure's division of Language: the one in practice, Parole, and the abstract structure that underlies, the Langue. Similarly, the Ontological Langue as the (supposed) structure of the individual, the human self.

Consider the ontological language of the tattoo, broadly of culture. As search for the true self S_f , a series of approximations from the current self S_c to S_f , given time. As formally represented -

$$S_c \rightarrow S_f \text{ (approx.) } S_T$$

$$\xrightarrow{\text{time}}$$

Culturally, across partisanship, the “true” self (or nature) holds acceptance. From the flawed rationale of empirical psychology as evidence for personality difference among the sexes, to the liberal-left view on transgender issues - that a gendered brain is our true selves; in all fairness, a view accepted by the cis-norm too. Even the word “self”, has strong linguistic connotations relating it to essentialism.

All for the lack of any evidence, take the structural understanding of human biology. The synaptic plasticity of the brain, its ability to rewire itself perpetually, modify-destroy-forge new connections; if anything, points to humans as fluctuating beings. Perhaps one is composed of abstract faculties, founded in flux, that given context molds itself into particulars. It is not as if a butterfly tattoo is what the “true” self wants.

Return to the misnomer, a quasi-description of a minimal ontology - relative to the assumptions-abstractions. Flux ontology, that of the Anti-Language. It needs further study, as it exists now constitutes mere theory. However, one expels ideas, leaves them out open, taking on the danger of being wrong: that is, risking the chance it is right.

Consider the present self, S_p . A product of the innate faculties-desires and the contingent environment-experiences. Here, an ontological change is not a return to the true self, the vile platonic-christian kind. Rather a creation of something, that is not S_p - however, created given S_p beyond itself. Call it the beyond self S_b . With time, the ontological process constitutes the creation and re-creation of the self, and nothing else.

$$S_{c_0} \rightarrow S_{b_1} = S_{c_1} \rightarrow S_{b_2} = \dots = S_{c_{n-1}} \rightarrow S_{b_n}$$

$$\circlearrowleft (S_c \rightarrow S_b)$$

—————→
time

Amor Fati: a Di-contrast - Now, a contrast is drawn between the kinds of Amor Fati: of the Stoic and of Nietzsche.

Do not seek for things to happen the way you want them to; rather, wish that what happens happen the way it happens: then you will be happy.

- Enchiridion, Epictetus

Amor fati, the stoic kind, is characterized by its two tenets: determinism and equanimity. First, Amor Fati as the ethical implication of stoic deterministic metaphysics. If everything is, and happens, as “nature” dictates, that even ourselves are its products, its wave-tides - individual outcomes of miniscule relevance to the broad picture: the “rational” response is to lover our fate, the determinism. A self-imposed self-fulfilling prophecy, the Stoic kind.

Next, Amor Fati as tool for psychological stabilization. As Epictetus writes, once the determinism is understood and Amor Fati taken upon - the removal of meaning, a void of significance, erasing suffering. The individual becomes happy, rather claims equanimity, in accordance with nature..

As Aurelius writes -

He does only what is his to do, and considers constantly what the world has in store for him—doing his best, and trusting that all is for the best. For we carry our fate with us—and it carries us. He keeps in mind that all rational things are related, and that to care for all human beings is part of being human.

- Meditations, Marcus Aurelius

Now, Amor Fati - of the Nietzschean kind. His writing, perhaps its untimely nature and charged language, is a recipe for misinterpretation. To clean off the contemporary stoic misinterpretation of his Amor Fati, that is my aim. The onset, a case of language taken literal, the issue of determinism in Nietzschean Amor Fati.

My formula for human greatness is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not in the future, not in the past, not for all eternity. Not only to endure what is necessary, still less to conceal it — all idealism is falseness in the face of necessity — , but to love it..

- Ecce Homo, Friedrich Nietzsche

Even context lies murky here. Nietzsche has critiqued free will, in favor of determinism, specifically of our drives, desires and wills. He stands against free will, that which posits a conscious being apart from our instincts. However determinism, that which denies free will's existence, becomes determinism beyond determinism. Relative to the contemporary conversation surrounding it and the Stoic stance on it.

For the stoics, the conscious self must realize its inefficacy in overpowering nature, the abstract metaphysical entity. Nietzsche, however, rejects such a self. Allow me to create beyond Nietzsche - our desires, the ontology that constitutes its (desires) totality is the self. Thus, we arrive at the beyond sphere of free will contra determinism. Negating the affirmative, a realm of zombies, an untimely place.

Besides, the stoic return to equanimity is non-existent in Nietzsche. Amor Fati as acceptance of outcomes under the pursuit of desires; good-bad, beautiful-ugly, pleasurable-painful. To fight against reality and upon failure accepting it in all nobility.

An understanding of the will, and its transformative powers, allows for such acceptance. That I have pursued authenticity in desire, and now that failure has called for me? I shall love it, in all its ugliness, to even weep and rage is permitted, for I have acted authentically.

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.

- The Gay Science, Friedrich Nietzsche

Flux and the Necessity of Amor Fati - A necessary condition to realize ontology as flux, I claim, is Amor Fati. Proposition: Given an individual has realized flux ontology, they relate with Amor Fati. A proof by contradiction suffices. Assume the realization of flux ontology, then an incident of guilt. That at time $t_{i < n}$, an act a occurred such that in the now, time n , it causes regret: that I wish I hadn't a .

Take the flux ontological process. In the abstract form, at time p (present), the self S_p pursues the set of authentic desires, as known at time p . Note that desires unknown still are a possibility, for example ones concealed by neurosis, but in other will-spheres¹. Here, one pursues the authentic desire(s) to create something beyond, that is not S_p , however, given S_p . Implications at play: one, S_p is operating from authentic desires, and two, S_p knows S_b could be anything, that is not S_p ; even a complete inversal, as symbolized by the letters p and b . Also, the initial assumptions warrant S_b as accepting flux ontology too.

Then, if regret happens, two possibilities emerge. One, S_p 's act a didn't originate from authentic desires, leaving us with realization of flux ontology as incoherent for S_p . Second, S_b finds S_p 's actions inauthentic, displacing a to regret. If not the first, S_p must not have come from inauthenticity, resulting in S_b valuing a from the present authentic desire(s). But, an acceptance of flux ontology involves the acceptance of radical change, even of inversals, of not S_p (and S_b). Thus, a contradiction again.

Tattoo: Materializer of Amor Fati - Tattoos have potential to be interpreted as explicit symbols of Amor Fati. Not to say that all tattoos are part of such explicitization. For mostly, tattoos are embedded as symbols of the essentialist self, that which I am, and after that, as additional drivers for self-fulfilling prophecies - relative to the individual's ontology.

However, a radical departure in view. Tattoos to be appreciated, not for their representation of who we are, rather who we were - that which we still could be.

¹ See [Lain's Room. Consolidation of the Wills. and Self-Overcoming](#)

And the love for the transformations until now. Love for the flux now, the flux of the past, the mistakes, the pain, the joys, the victories. That the present flux-self, uniquely, is a product of all the selves existed hitherto.

And the grounds for what lies beyond.



To live my philosophy.

References

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